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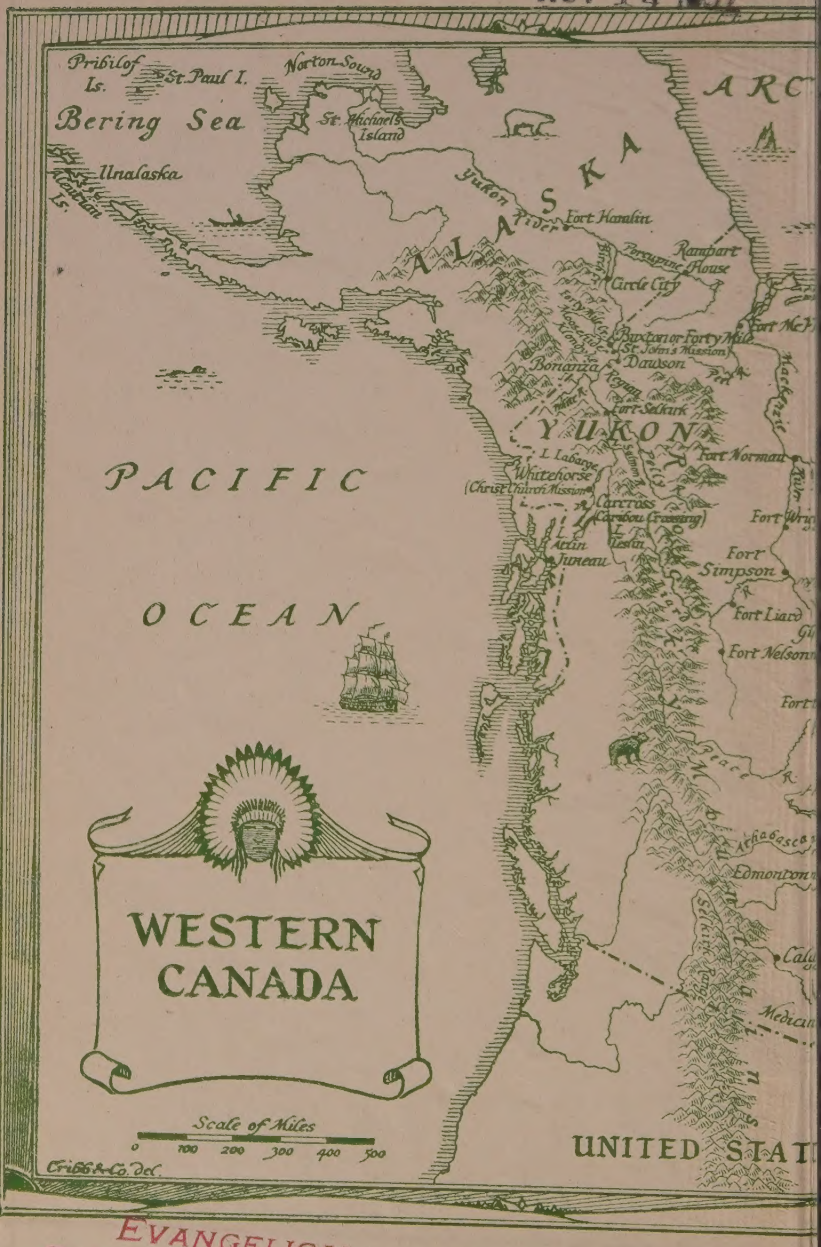

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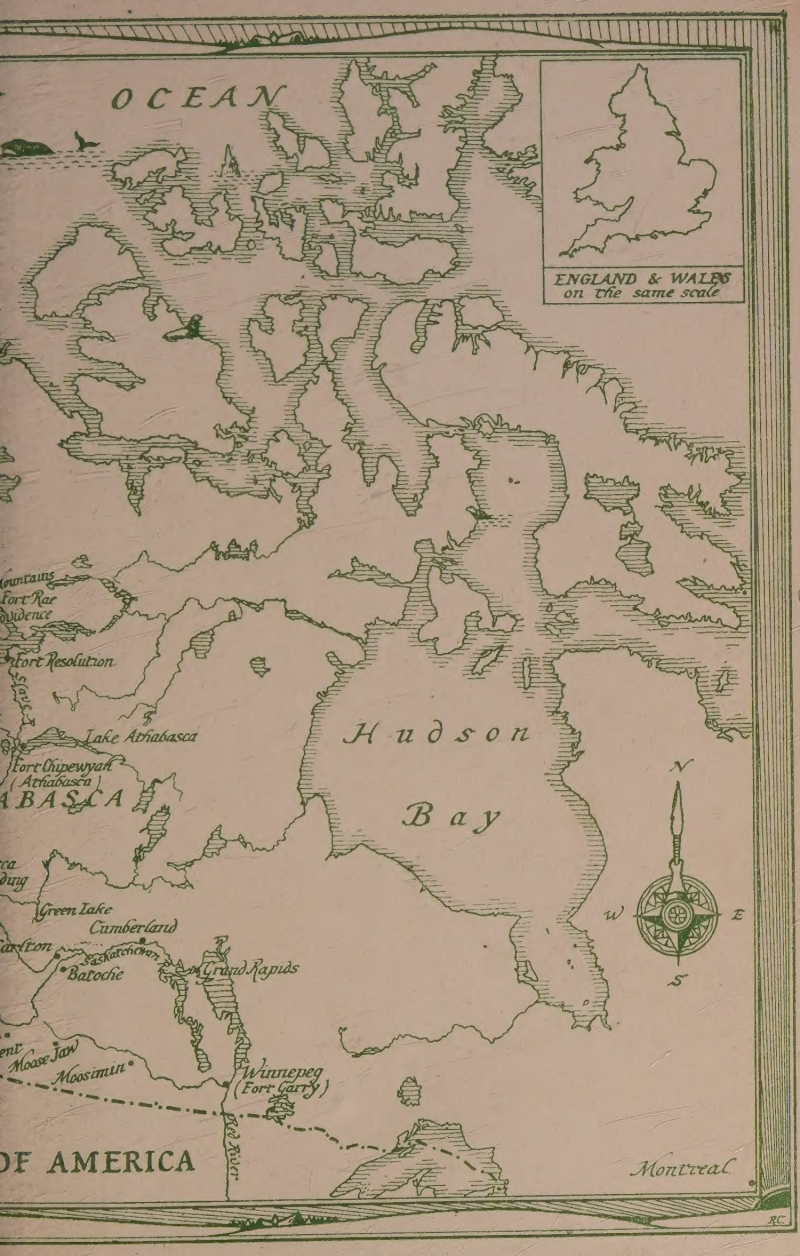
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Moosimin
Winnepeg
(Fort Garry)
Red River
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A HEROINE OF THE NORTH

MEMOIRS OF CHARLOTTE SELINA BOMPAS

EVA[illegible]ICAL
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Mrs. Bompas

Aged 86

A HEROINE OF THE NORTH

MEMOIRS OF CHARLOTTE SELINA BOMPAS

(1830–1917)

WIFE OF THE FIRST BISHOP OF SELKIRK (YUKON)

WITH EXTRACTS FROM HER JOURNAL AND LETTERS

COMPILED BY
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SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

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LONDON
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE
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EVANGELICAL
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

PREFACE

I HAVE often been asked how people coming from tropical climes could bear the rigours of extreme Arctic weather. It is really remarkable how human beings can accommodate themselves to various surroundings as they wander over the face of the earth. I have known men who came direct from the South Sea Islands and lived through the winter on board whale-ships at Herschel Island, who appeared to be just as much at home at forty or fifty degrees below zero as others who were accustomed to an Arctic climate all their lifetime.

This adaptability is also true of what we might call intellectual surroundings. Fifty-four years ago, when Mrs. Bompas first went with her husband from England to North-West Canada, comparatively little was known, either in North America or England, regarding the remote Northern regions. Few people realise even to-day the privations and loneliness Mrs. Bompas endured. Brought up and educated under refined surroundings in England and Italy, this woman of God was willing to spend, and be spent, in the Master's service, in isolated regions, among primitive and degraded Indians.

Frail in body though she was, her endurance and perseverance were remarkable. On the verge of starvation, she sometimes had to depend for food, from day to day, on the rabbit snare and the daily dole of the meagre fish net.

During the Bishop's long periods of absence from home while visiting his vast diocese, Mrs. Bompas carried on the missionary work as best she could with zeal and courage.

Bishop Bompas tried to spare his wife some of the hardships that he himself was so willing to endure, and he urged her, whenever possible, to visit friends in Eastern Canada and England. However, as soon as a sufficient excuse presented itself, Mrs. Bompas insisted on returning to her home in the North. Many and varied were her places of residence from the time she reached Fort Simpson on the Mackenzie River in 1874, till the summer of 1906 when we laid her husband's body to rest in the Indian cemetery overlooking the lake at Carcross in Southern Yukon.

Very little has been preserved concerning the life and work of the early Northern pioneers. It is a great satisfaction, therefore, to know that through Mrs. Archer's enthusiasm and devotion, these memoirs, obtained through the kind assistance of Mrs. Bompas's relatives and others, are to be published in book form. I am sure the unembellished record of some of Mrs. Bompas's experiences, given in her own words, will be of intense interest, not only to her many friends, but to

the public at large. We should be thankful to have thus preserved for posterity, at least the partial records of the daily life of one of the heroines of the Church—one of the Saints of God.

I. O. STRINGER,
BISHOP OF YUKON.

Commissary and Administrator of the Diocese of Mackenzie River.

DAWSON,
YUKON,
CANADA.
April, 1928.

Our thanks are due to Messrs. Seeley, Service and Co., Ltd., and to Archdeacon Cody for permission to quote from the latter's valuable book "An Apostle of the North."

2816

EVANGELICAL
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

(*Contributed by a Niece*)

THE Reverend William Carpenter Bompas, who had been labouring in Northern Canada under the Church Missionary Society for nine years, was recalled to England in 1873 to be consecrated first Bishop of the newly formed Diocese of Athabasca.

The journey from this isolated mission took many months. A vivid description of its dangers and difficulties is given by Archdeacon Cody in his book, "An Apostle of the North." Indeed, these memoirs of Mrs. Bompas will be even more interesting and thrilling if read with a copy of this book at hand.

Mr. Bompas, who was now forty years old, was consecrated early in May, 1874, and was married a few days later, being anxious to return to his work before the short Northern summer was over. His wife, the subject of this memoir, was his cousin Charlotte Selina (Nina), a younger daughter of Joseph Cox, M.D., of Montague Square, London, and was just four years his senior, having been born on February 24, 1830. Dr. Cox belonged to a Worcestershire family, of which a cadet branch had migrated to Gloucestershire, where they owned property in the neighbourhood of Bristol, Overn Hill, with its beautiful grounds, and the old manor house of Fishponds.

Most of this land has now been built over, though some of the trees and the handsome iron gates remained until recently.

He married Charlotte, a daughter of Mr. George Skey,* of the Hythe, Upton-on-Severn, and a sister to Mr. Frederick Carpenter Skey, C.B., the celebrated surgeon. Both she and her sister Sophia were brilliant musicians, and the Skeys, and neighbouring families at the Hythe and Ham House, were noted for their musical parties. This talent was inherited by my Aunt Nina and her sister Julia (Mrs. Bengough), and they had the advantage of the best masters in music and singing when living in Italy for many years.

Her father, with his wife and four surviving children, went to reside in Italy in the forties, as he suffered much from asthma, and hoped to obtain some relief in a warmer climate.

They lived for many years at Castelmare in the Palazza Partana on the heights above the beautiful Bay of Naples, so that the early and most impressionable years of her life were passed in Italy. It was in Naples that she "came out," and we children used to love to hear from the aunts descriptions of all their gaieties: the naval dances when the Fleet was in, sometimes prolonged to breakfast-time; the picnics and excursions to everything of interest in the neighbour-

* The Skeys—for long settled in Worcestershire and Gloucestershire—are of Dutch extraction; the family possess a tree of uninterrupted descent from Sir William Skeye, Kt., who came to England with Queen Matilda, 1137.

hood. At her first ball she had the honour of dancing with the King, an interesting event for a young girl to remember. I can recall my mother saying what a beautiful girl she thought her when they first met—her dazzling, fair complexion and bright blue eyes, with the regular, refined features characteristic of her father's family. She was full of spirit and *joie de vivre,* musical, cultivated, artistic, loving all that was beautiful in Rome and Florence.

Such was her early youth—a contrast, indeed, to the life that she gave in later years so wholeheartedly to her Master's work.

To write what we remember of our beloved Aunt Nina is not easy, for there are big gaps between youthful memories and the different visits she paid to England after her marriage. One recalls her brightness (for she always looked on the bright side of things), and her vivacity, and that she was by nature self-willed, impulsive, sympathetic, full of kind thoughts for others. She had a wonderfully active brain, and her powers of description are shown by her letters, bringing life in the far West of Canada before us as a series of pictures. In those days it was very far away, for communication was difficult, and the eagerly expected mails were often delayed, perhaps for weeks, even months.

She wrote many stories in early years; her best, perhaps, was "Niccolo Marini," a tale of the Italian revolution; she also contributed to magazines—in fact,

her pen was always busy. She wrote many charming verses, beautiful thoughts, grave or gay, just as the fancy took her. "The Aunts" often stayed with us when we were young, and I well remember one room at the top of the Vicarage that we were not allowed to play in, as Aunt Nina used to write there. There were two windows looking different ways over the big chestnut-trees towards the river, and there she loved to stay—leaning on the window-seat with her head in her hands, dreaming and planning many things, little thinking what a wonderful call to the mission field lay before her. In Italy she had drunk in everything that was beautiful in music and art, and acquired, like her brother* and sisters, a perfect mastery of the Italian language. Even as an old lady she always carried her Dante in her pocket.

For a few years after her return to England from Italy, she lived with her elder sister Emma† at Babbacombe, Torquay, and it was there that in 1874 her cousin for the second time asked her to be his wife and share with him his work in the mission field. Few knew what a terrible wrench the parting caused by Nina's marriage was to the two sisters. It was to Emma that most of the letters included in this volume were written from Canada.

* The Rev. J. Mason Cox, M.A., St. John's College, Oxford, Vicar of Bishop's Tawton, Prebendary of Exeter.

† Miss Emma Sophia Cox, for many years a resident in the Close at Salisbury, where she was well known and loved by many. She died in February, 1901.

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SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

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TABLE OF DATES

1830. Born February 24.
1874. Married May 7—Sailed May 12—Arrived Fort Simpson September 24.
1875. At Fort Simpson.
1876. Left Fort Simpson June 29—Reached Athabasca July.
1877. Bishop returns after long absence—Baby Jeannie died January—Left for Winnipeg in Spring.
1878-1879. Famine in home Diocese—"Mrs. Bompas not in country."
1879. Left Winnipeg May 15—Returned to Fort Simpson.
1881. Journey to Fort Norman.
1882. Left Fort Norman in Spring—Going to Fort Resolution (Bishop away nine months).
1883. March, Bishop returned and arranged for Mrs. Bompas to revisit England—Bishop away again for one year.
1885. Returned from England—Delayed by Riel Rebellion—Obliged to remain in Winnipeg one year.
1886. Left Winnipeg April 30—Returning to the North.
1887. Left North again for England, never returning to Mackenzie River Diocese.
1888-1892. In Montreal.
1889. Spent Christmas in Ottawa.
1892. Left Yale, B.C., for North, May 7—At Forty Mile August 4.
1893-1894-1895. At Forty Mile (Buxton).
1896. Summoned to England.
1897. Left England July 12—Stranded at Fort Yukon (because of gold craze) September 14.
1898. About May reached Forty Mile.
1900. Moosehide, also at Buxton (Forty Mile).
1900-1906. Carcross—Death of Bishop.
1906-1907. England.
1907-1917. Westmount, P.Q.
1917. January, at Rest.

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MEMOIRS OF MRS. BOMPAS

CHAPTER I

THE OUTWARD JOURNEY

(May—September, 1874)

THE Bishop and Mrs. Bompas sailed for New York early in May, 1874. Their destination was Fort Simpson, a well-known Hudson Bay settlement for trading furs, which is situated at the confluence of the Mackenzie and Liard Rivers, and formed the most central and convenient point for managing the vast diocese.

"Travelling in 1874 was less simple than it is now, and the journey took four months—via New York, Chicago, St. Paul, Red River, Winnipeg.

"From New York they took the train for Niagara, and, having visited the famous waterfall, travelled on to Chicago and thence to St. Paul. After a tedious trip they arrived at the Red River, and took the heavy flat-bottomed boat bound for Winnipeg, as the village around Fort Garry was already called.

"At length Winnipeg was reached one Sunday morning, and the great-hearted leader, Bishop Machray, gave them a most cordial welcome.

"Ahead of them lay the long journey of two months by open boat to Fort Simpson. They had missed the boats of the Hudson Bay Company, and after some difficulty another was obtained, in the hope of over-

taking the former. It was a 'brilliant cloudless' June morning when they crossed the prairie towards St. John's Cathedral and sighted the 'river looking still and silvery in the morning light,' and found the boat, their home for weeks to come, 'moored just below St. John's College.' Farewells were said, the boat pushed off, and they moved on their way, leaving the Bishop of Rupert's Land waving his hand from the bank of the stream.

"It was a tedious journey, as day after day they glided forward.

"'I had come prepared for intense cold,' wrote Mrs. Bompas, 'and we were destined to endure tropical heat. All up the Saskatchewan, Stanley, and English Rivers the banks slope down like a funnel, and the July and August sun scorches with vertical rays the heads of the travellers. We were seated in open boats, each with a crew of ten or twelve men, who spread our sails when the wind was fair, and took them in when the wind failed us. Eighty-six was on some of those days our average temperature, and I had come provided with the thickest of serge dresses, as none of my friends had realized the possibility of anything but frost and cold in these northern regions. Besides this, we had to encounter swarms of mosquitoes, crowding thick around us, penetrating our boots and stockings, and invading our robabou soup and pemmican, etc. I remember the bliss it was in those days in camping time to escape from the rest of the party, and, getting rid of boots and stockings, to sit with my feet and legs in the cool water of the river to soothe the intolerable irritation of the mosquito bites.'"*

* "An Apostle of the North," pp. 158-160, 166.

An Incident of the Journey from Winnipeg to Fort Simpson told later by Mrs. Bompas

July 17, 1874.

It was about six o'clock p.m., the sun still high, but a fresh breeze had sprung up and was filling the sail of our boat, and giving us comfort and refreshment after a sultry day. We were beginning to discuss our landing, wondering where our steersman intended to encamp that night, as all these details are left to his control and management.

Suddenly, as we were quietly sailing on, an exclamation was made by one of the sailors, and as suddenly all eyes were eagerly directed towards a line of thick wood which encircled a bay on our right. It would be impossible to give any idea of the intense eagerness which marked the gaze of our ten men. You must know something of the Red Indian's intensity of character and his love of sport to be able to understand and appreciate it. Our "fore-oar man," Charley, especially attracted my attention. Such a strange, tawny face as his was when passive, with long black hair hanging on each side of his face (as a disordered attempt at whiskers and moustache!) But now he stood with head stretched forward, one hand clutching nervously at his oar, the other shading his eyes, every sense, almost every nerve, in a state of tension. We longed to ask what object they saw which had so excited them, but scarcely ventured to do so, for silence had overspread our crew, and though apparently much was being discussed and important matters decided upon, yet it was all done by signs or in low, whispered accents. At last some conclusion

was evidently arrived at, the sail was lowered, and our course altered in the direction of the wood in question; at the same time the Bishop ascertained from one of the men, and whispered to me the cause of all this excitement—namely, "a black bear!"

It needed the quick eye and ear of a Red Indian to detect the bear, if such it were, at the distance we then found ourselves from the wood and amid the countless shadows of those great Norway pines, or the grotesque forms of aged stumps and stones which edged the wood; and for some moments I felt that it was all a mistake. However, the men had full faith in their hero, though I had none, and so, still in dead silence, we moved steadily on, making for the wood at the exact point where the dark object had first been visible. It really was very striking, the way in which we drew up to shore and lowered our sail, and all with no more sound than would have awakened a sleeping infant. And now two of the men stepped ashore, having first possessed themselves of loaded guns; others followed with stealthy footsteps, and all soon disappeared in the mazes of the thick forest. One thing I could here observe for myself which laid my doubts to rest as to the fact of the bear having actually been seen—*great spreading paw-prints on the sand!*

The part left for us to play at this time was certainly less exciting and less interesting than that of our men. Close in to shore at that time of the evening mosquitoes invariably abound. This evening they positively swarmed, and in addition to this there were a number of sand-flies, so small that no veil could keep them out. Moreover, there was not much to look at beyond the tall pines and the little bay in which we so unexpectedly found ourselves, and we hardly even now

ventured to speak, so fearful were we of injuring the interests of the chase. Suddenly there was the sound of a gun fired, which roused our interest and made us feel as if the game meant something in right earnest. Then another report was heard, and after a few moments' interval came shouts of triumph, with cries and screams such as only Red Indians can give.

Our boat party, in the meantime, being weary of the mosquitoes and becoming excited by the matter in hand, had gone ashore. We gathered sticks and faggots, and soon kindled a splendid fire, round which we closely gathered, thankful for the momentary relief from our insect tormentors, as no mosquitoes dare invade the region of smoke or fire. Soon was heard the sound of approaching footsteps—tramp, tramp, tramp, as of men marching under some burden ; these were accompanied by the sound of merry voices, and then the party came in sight—the two foremost men carrying a stout pole, to which, with his legs tied together, hung the body of poor Bruin. The men brought up their trophy and laid it down at my feet, amid the ferns and bluebells and pretty golden tansy, for us to examine. A splendid bear he was, very fat—and with hair as sleek and glossy as if he had always been accustomed to bear's grease. Our young French Canadian, who had shot him, said that he had tracked the poor beast for some distance and then stood still till, in a few moments, he heard the rustle of leaves and breaking twigs and the slow tread of the four paws. When he came in sight one shot made him fall and another bullet did for him wholly.

That night—that very night—over our camp-fire a huge caldron was suspended, and joints of bear meat were cooked and eaten and, I presume, enjoyed by our

men. I was thankful to be excused from sharing in the repast that evening, but a dish of bear steaks was presented to me next morning for breakfast, and, after having conquered a certain feeling of repugnance, I could not but pronounce them excellent.

* * * * *

[Poor Mrs. Bompas ! The time came when she was only too thankful and delighted to hear of bear steaks for supper or dinner—a time when starvation stared her in the face. This occurred not once or twice, but many times.

On September 24 they came in sight of Fort Simpson, and much excitement was evident. The red flag of welcome was soon hoisted ; Mr. Hardisty, Chief Officer, as well as the whole settlement, came to the shore to meet them. So hearty was the reception that they did not perceive the shadow—the grim shadow of starvation that was hanging over the Fort and land.]

CHAPTER II

FORT SIMPSON

(September, 1874—June, 1876)

First Letter from Fort Simpson

Fort Simpson, Mackenzie River,
North-West Territory.
October 9, 1874.

My own dearest Sister,

You will see by the date that we have at last reached the end of our long journey. This we did September 24—a day bright and beautiful, with clear bracing air (after the months of cruel heat), and preceded by a moonlit night and exquisite aurora borealis. I had felt latterly very tired of the journey and on the point of knocking up. We went through the same constant monotony of lake and river and portage over and over again, the only variety being that the weather became ever more damp and chilly in the evenings and nights. We had some severe storms, which were not agreeable in our open boat.

We had a good deal of trouble with our sailors after parting with our nice Red River crew; sometimes they were most difficult to procure at any price. Our men gave William a great deal of trouble, and at one time I feared a complete mutiny.

Another difficulty we had was the shortage of provisions. We could only get small supplies at each Fort to help us on to the next, and if detained by contrary

winds or rebellious Indians, we had some difficulty to eke them out among ourselves with servants and sailors. However, by God's great mercy we were helped on day by day, and supplies never *did* fail, though at one time we ate our last piece of meat for dinner, without the slightest knowledge of where we should find supper.

On Monday, September 21 (dear St. Matthew's Day), we entered the great Mackenzie River. We had been some days crossing Great Slave Lake, which is very beautiful, dotted with little islands. We encountered on this lake one of the stiffest gales on the whole of our journey, so that we had to put in at Fort Resolution, where we were detained five days. Then we got on to Hay River, stopping a few hours at Fort Providence, after which we entered the Mackenzie River. It is so beautiful from the first—its curves so graceful; and one remarkable feature is the strong current in the midst of the stream—so strong that we could dispense with oar and sail, and simply drift down, night and day, while our men wrapped themselves in their blankets and went to sleep.

Well, at last, after two nights' drifting, we drew near Fort Simpson. There was a curve in the river and a pretty little island ahead, and William said: "After *that* we shall see Fort Simpson." It was very exciting to catch sight of it at last—this great goal which we had so toiled after and suffered so much to attain! There it was! First, the Fort on a high embankment, some houses and tents clustering near, and, about a quarter of a mile distant, the cathedral! A pretty, really pretty, little church with spire all complete, of wood, of course, and native built. As we drew near we saw that our boat was observed, and immediately the

red flag was hoisted on the flagstaff, and all the Fort officers and their wives, and all the rest of the colony, including the carpenter, blacksmith, and schoolmaster, etc., mustered on the beach to receive us. They all seemed pleased, and gave me a kind welcome to Fort Simpson. Our house is shared with Mr. and Mrs. Reeve and three children.

[Later, referring to their arrival, Mrs. Bompas wrote:]

Last autumn the stock provisions in the stores was lower than ever before—*i.e.*, only sufficient for one week. Most of the men had to be sent away to hunt for themselves, and there was great difficulty in collecting scraps of meat for the wives and children. It came at last to the point when there was not another meal left. But on the evening of that very day two Indians came in bringing fresh meat. From that moment the supplies have never failed. As surely as they got low, so surely would sledges appear unexpectedly bringing fresh supplies. It was when matters were at the worst last autumn that we and our party arrived, bringing six extra mouths to be fed besides the boat's crew. Yet the Company's officers received us with the utmost courtesy and good temper, and although we could see that they were in great depression of spirits, they did their best to look and speak cheerfully and hopefully on the matter.

* * * * *

October 28.

I have been here nearly five weeks and begin to feel more settled, though our house is not as comfortable as I hope to make it. All my provision stores I have arranged up in the attic (no cupboards). Alas, they

are not so much as one could wish, owing to our having had to open our flour bag in the boat to satisfy the men; also our bag of rice got wet, and a great part has had to be thrown away, and the rest is injured, and I must confess—very nasty! Also, by mistake, our chief grocery box was left behind, and we shall not get it till next fall, so we want many things I should have been thankful for. We have no coffee or cocoa, only a little arrowroot given me by a friend. No cornflour or starch. It is very vexatious, but one must cheer up and make the best of it. In the meantime God is very merciful to us, and sends us so many little helps through the kindness of friends. One has given us 12 lbs. of good rice, another a little coffee, another some candles, and one day, to my delight, there came a small keg of butter. We only allow ourselves to bake once a week, using about 5 lbs. of flour. This gives William and me a small piece of bread once a day, and all our party—*i.e.*, schoolmaster, catechist, and servants—a good-sized piece twice a week. Besides this we have a few biscuits, of which William makes me take one a day. We have a chest of tea and a keg of sugar, so, after all, we are fairly off for provisions. The Hudson Bay Co. provides the missionaries with meat and fish (at pretty high prices), on condition that we never trade in fur with the Indians. It seems hard not to be able to get anything for myself or to send home. Only the other day I had in my hand a lovely black fox skin which I could have got for a few beads or half a pound of tea, and I might not! Twice a week a great bell is rung at the Fort, and all the Colony get their "prey."

Our "prey" has hitherto (five weeks!) been only dried moose-deer meat. It looks for all the world like

a heap of dirty, rough shoe leather. This we have boiled for breakfast, dinner, and tea. However, I am thankful to say we are promised a good supply of rabbits through the winter. It is wonderful how one's capacity for food increases in this climate, especially the craving for fat or grease. I used to watch the Indians in our boat with such amaze and disgust—eating a piece of bread with a lump of moose-deer fat like lard! I believe I could now do the same with great satisfaction.

Now a little about our mission work. Near the Fort are some tents inhabited by Indians—just skins sewn together, opening at top for smoke—warm but dirty. The Indians all speak Slavé, a dialect akin to Chippewyan. They wear skins or leather dresses, ornamented with beads and fringe. The men are good-looking, the women coarse and mostly plain. Besides these, there are constantly Indians coming and going, and they all sooner or later turn up at the Mission House. William talks so nicely and earnestly to all, and tries to get the children to school and all to church. Just now we have a class of Indians in the afternoon, and I go in and make them sing and do calisthenic exercises. Before this I preside over an ablutionary department, and then send them outside with a comb by which their black shaggy manes are reduced to order. They call me "Yalti Betzani" (Bishop's wife).

The Diocese of Athabasca: Note by Mrs. Bompas

The Athabasca Diocese extends both in length and breadth to a distance about equal to the length of the

two provinces of Quebec and Ontario together, the length of the diocese being from end to end 3,000 miles and containing 750,000 square miles. The distance from London to Constantinople will represent to a European the length and breadth of the diocese.

The length and tediousness of travel in this country may be compared to a voyage in a canal barge up and down the Rhine and Danube from England to Turkey. If all the populations between London and Constantinople were to disappear except a few tents of Indian or gipsy encampments, and were all the cities and towns obliterated except a few log huts on the site of the chief capitals—such is the solitary waste of this land. Again, were all the diversity of landscape changed into an unbroken line of pines and willows—such is this country !

The Cathedral Church of St. David, Fort Simpson, Diocese of Athabasca

The first *Confirmation* held in this church took place on Sunday, November 22, 1874. There were only four candidates, three Indians and one half-breed. The service was very simple, quiet, and impressive ; the little church was well filled. The Bishop gave a very touching address, taking as his text the first verse of the morning Lesson (Eccles. xii) : " Remember now, etc." The snow lay several feet thick upon the ground, and the thermometer stood at about twenty degrees below zero. The outer world was cold and wintry enough, but there was warmth within.

The first *Ordination* in this church took place on Advent Sunday, 1874, when the Rev. H. D. Reeve was admitted to Priest's Orders. The Bishop preached

from the First Epistle of St. Peter i. 5. Much interest was shown in the service by the little congregation, to whom such a thing was entirely new. The Holy Communion was celebrated, and the nine communicants included three of the newly confirmed.

Extracts from Mrs. Bompas's Journal. Fort Simpson, Mackenzie River, North-West Canada, December, 1874—March, 1875.

December 27, 1874.

I am beginning a journal as a sequel to the one* I kept on the journey. I must lessen, if possible, the great distance which separates us by putting you *au courant* with my life here. Thoughts and feelings will go down, as well as the details of daily occupations.

I am leading now a solitary, widowed life, and find it hard, at times, to realize that I am really married! Dear William left me on December 8 for Fort Rae. He will remain there probably about three weeks, visiting the Indians around, and holding services for the white men residing at the Fort. From thence he will proceed to Salt River and Slave Lake, and so on to Athabasca, where he will probably stay to hold a confirmation and then return North, D.V., with the winter Packet the middle or end of March. That Packet! Oh, how I long for it! It will bring me, I trust, my dear home letters. Eight months have passed since I left them all, and as yet no line has reached me, except those few from Selina, written a few days after we started. It has been a long, weary waiting. I know not how I could have borne the thought of it

* This one never reached England.

had I foreseen the possibility of such a long, long time of silence—such a blank in one's life. One hope after another has failed me. My last was that a chance Packet might come in December. This has happened for the last two years, but alas ! this month has almost ended and there is no sound of the Packet. God's love and mercy are great in sustaining me through this trial. As the time draws near I begin almost to dread my letters. What changes will not six months have brought ?

By-the-by, I never described William's equipment, etc., when he started. I must try to do so.

It was about nine o'clock a.m. that the party were to assemble at the Fort, outside of which, before that time, were collected pretty nearly our whole colony. It was a clear, beautiful morning, November 27, 1874. The great frozen river glittering in the sunshine—not a smooth glassy surface, as you might fancy, but all covered with huge boulders of ice, and these again thickly covered with snow. Some of these boulders assume grotesque forms, you might imagine them great monsters come up from the river depths. Others look like birds, and some again like a beautiful foamy wave caught by the ice just in the act of curling.

Here are our "trippers," as they are called, all ready to start, and my Bishop in his fur cap and warm wraps which I have made him. Large mittens made of deer-skin and fur, suspended from his neck as is the custom here, thick dark flannel leggings, moccasins with two pairs of duffel socks, etc., while for the night a splendid deer-skin robe—that is, two skins sewn together and lined with a blanket. This will be his bed and covering, with a warm woollen cap which I

have made in crochet. I trust thus he will defy the weather, though the thermometer be down to sixteen below zero. The other travellers are all accoutred more or less in the same way. William takes with him Allan Hardisty, an Indian, who is being trained as a catechist. He packed the sledges last evening with their bags of clothing and provisions for the way, blankets, cooking implements, etc. There are the three sledges, and the dogs ready harnessed. I am rather proud of my tapis which, amid sundry difficulties, I contrived to get finished (with some help) in time. Now comes the word, "Off! all ready!" and our farewells are said, the drivers smack their whips—the dogs cry out and start in full scamper, the trippers running by the side of the sledges at such a pace that all are soon out of sight. They are to cross the river a little higher up, and then make for the Horn Mountains where they hope to find plenty of deer.

On Christmas Day we had a congregation of twenty-three Indians, which was above the average, and then I had planned a Christmas dinner for twelve old Indian wives. Dear old things! They did their best to get themselves up for the occasion, and some of their leather dresses were quite smart, profusely ornamented with beads, with fringes of leather and tin tassels. I had dinner prepared in the schoolroom, the cloth spread and knives and forks, etc. But these proved useless, for though some of the women did try to use them to please me, their efforts were quite ineffectual, and they were soon forced to lay them down and take to Nature's implements. The dinner consisted of moose meat and rabbits, and then I surprised them with—actually—a plum-pudding. This latter

produced a great effect ; I heard of it afterwards ; no one had ever shown them a pudding before. Then there was a plentiful supply of tea, which is the favourite beverage of the Indians. The conversation was not very animated, but as the chief object was to ply them well with food, there was not much talk required. As they rose from the table after I had said Grace, one old woman rushed up to me and grasped my hand exclaiming, "Merci ! Merci !" and, indeed, they all seemed delighted, more especially when I signalled to them on going out that they might light their pipes.

My next grand effort was a Christmas-tree for the children of the colony. Such a thing had not only not been *seen,* but never *heard of* before, and as whispers of it went abroad the excitement and curiosity it awakened were past description. I set my heart on giving a present to every child, both white and Indian. The *whites* are chiefly the children of the officers at the Fort, and to them I could not, of course, offer clothes, so I had to manufacture toys and other small gifts out of no materials. Years ago in my childhood, when my busy fingers accomplished things of this kind, my dear mother used to tell me I should one day be the head of a toy-shop. How little did she then dream in what way her words would be fulfilled ! I actually made a lamb, "Mackenzie River breed," all horned and woolly, with sparkling black eyes. Also dolls, painted and dressed. One infant in a moss bag like the babies here. Some dancing men moved by strings, one sailor, which was my best. Also I produced, though not made by me, only under my direction, a whip with carved handle, and a drum, also balls, work-cases, etc. Then I had aprons and leggings for the servant girls, and some that were left of the beautiful

gifts from England for the Indians. In all I have above forty presents on the tree. The chief difficulty was, first, candles to light it up (as all our grease had failed). I petitioned Mr. Hardisty, the head officer at the Fort, for "just a little grease," and he kindly sent me his very last bladderful containing some six or eight pounds. Then I set our good-natured little blacksmith (an Orkney man) to work to make me some pretty little tin moulds, by means of which I was able to manufacture some small candles, large enough to burn about half an hour. The second difficulty was the tree itself, for which I sent out the men to search. Plenty of trees there were, pretty dark firs, but so thickly laden with snow that the branches were bent down to the very ground, and as for approaching the roots—it was out of the question. However, even this difficulty was met; a fine young tree was found, and the snow shaken off its branches, after which they resumed their natural shape. The tree was cut down as near the ground as possible, and we found an old milking tub which was deep enough to hold it and give a good broad margin round the stem. We were nearly all day dressing the tree, which I had placed in the kitchen. Mr. Hodgson, the schoolmaster, who was most helpful to me, made a beautiful text for one end of the room: "Peace on earth and goodwill towards men." He also made me some clever little stands for the candles, and some flags, etc. We dressed the rooms as well as we could with fir as our only evergreen.

At four o'clock the great bell sounded, which announced that the guests were to arrive. The whole neighbourhood had been on the tiptoe of expectation; new dresses had been made, and the most elaborate toilettes invented for "Mrs. Bompas's Christmas-

tree,'' which meant—no one knew what! I received my guests, parents and children, in the drawing-room, and in a few minutes marshalled the whole company into the kitchen. Do you remember the burst of rapture from the children at Bishop's Tawton in 1868 at our memorable Christmas-tree, and how it repaid us for all our toil and trouble? The delight and enthusiasm were no less manifest here, though the children in these frozen regions are usually less demonstrative than with us. I made them join hands and form a circle round the tree, the little ones inside, and the parents forming an outer ring. The poor Indian mothers, black and grimy as ever, squatted down in a bunch on the floor, with faces radiant from astonishment and delight. Then I began to strip the tree and to distribute the presents, all of which, I am glad to say, gave great satisfaction. Then I gave them tea and biscuits all round, and we sang some carols which I had taught the school-children, and so the evening ended, and I must confess it was a very happy one.

December 31.

How little did I dream this time last year of what was before me! We have an early service to-morrow in our little church. I am thankful for it. ''As soon as it is light,'' Mr. Reeve said, and that is not before nine o'clock. The dark mornings are a sore trial to me just now. I rise soon after six o'clock. Jacob lights my stove in the adjoining room a little before, so the room is tolerably warm by the time I go into it. Then I have a quiet time of one hour or more, and then grope my way back into my bedroom where there is not one spark of light to help me dress! And why this want of candles, do you ask? Well, you see, we have no

grease to make any, nor are we likely to have any until more Indians come in. They say the Fort has never been so short of grease before, and we are wanting it for soap as well as candles. The deer, at this time of the year, are generally very thin, poor creatures! How you would smile to see my jealous care over every particle of grease! How I save every small piece from my own candlestick and keep them in a little box which, at the end of some days, makes just enough to place in a saucer with a piece of wick, and this forms my "two wax candles" for dressing. I fear there is no chance of any more grease before spring, when, of course, the days are longer and we need it less.

A number of Indians are expected in to-day to keep New Year's Day, which is observed here with great festivity. From time to time the merry jingle of sledge bells is heard coming over the snow, and then appear the sledges laden with deer or rabbits. They are drawn by three or four dogs prettily harnessed with gay coloured "tapis" or saddle cloths and ribbon streamers. The bells are fastened on to these tapis, and the dogs seem to like them and to be inspirited by them as much as a Highland regiment is by its pipers.

January 4, 1875.

I am hoping for a letter from William by some Indians from Fort Rae who are expected with deer's meat. It will be a great comfort to hear from him. I feel so lonely and desolate at times. Still, I have a definite aim in life—a work, I trust, given me to do for the dear Master. I long to be more fully occupied with the real mission work. The Slavé language is always a difficulty. My servants are Crees, so I get little help

from them in learning this language, which is Slavé. Still, I hope by degrees I am picking it up, and I already understand a great deal of the Indian service on Sundays. It sounds very pretty in some of their hymns.

January 15, 1875.

I have been irregular in my journal of late, in fact, I find but little time for writing by daylight. Oh, for a few pounds of English composites or a little oil for my small lamp! It is hoped the Indians will bring us grease in the spring; till then we have to spend the long evenings in darkness. The weather is now unusually mild, only two or three degrees below zero yesterday and to-day. Last Saturday it was down to thirty-four degrees below, and I confess to feeling then almost paralysed. On that day some Dogrib Indians came in from Fort Rae. They had been expected for some days, and I had counted on their bringing me a letter from William, but to my intense disappointment they said they had no letter for the Bishop's wife. So I came home with my hope of weeks past crushed, and expecting only the long waiting until March before I can either hear from him or see him. But God was more gracious to me than my fears. On Sunday morning two more Dogribs came in bringing me my longed-for letter, so I was comforted, and yet the account made my heart ache. They had been short of provisions before reaching the Indian camp. They had counted upon falling in with some deer on the third or fourth day, but the east wind had set in and driven them away. They had taken provisions for only eight days, and it was ten before they could reach the camp. They got well supplied at the camp, but walking twenty miles a day with the thermometer ten or twelve degrees

below zero and with scant food is not pleasant to dwell upon.

January 16, 1875.

A bad headache yesterday put an end to my writing. Household worries have inclined me of late to much headache. This week's Collect (First Sunday after Epiphany) helps me now as it has done so often before in troublous times.

February 2, 1875.

Feast of the Purification. Sunday last, January 31, was, I think, one of the happiest days of my life. I arose at six o'clock and had my sweet, quiet time by firelight. Then I had to see to the tubbing and dressing of two children. (I had taken charge of the two "mitherless bairns" of Brown, the carpenter, for a few weeks while he was from home.) We were all assembled at the breakfast-table when suddenly came the sound of sledge bells. A bright, merry sound it is at all times, nor at all an unusual one on Sunday morning, a favourite day for arriving at a fort among the Indians. "But these are not Indians," said the schoolmaster, who was in the room. "These dogs have such smart tapis, they must be strangers." He had scarcely finished speaking when the door opened and William was before me. He had left me on December 8, nearly two months before, and I had no expectation of seeing him until the middle of March. Judge, then, of my amazement and delight. There he stood, looking quite handsome, with white, snowy beard fringed with icicles, in a deer-skin coat and beaver hat and mittens —a present from Fort Rae. He had come with one of the Hudson Bay sledges from Fort Rae, having changed his plan of going on to Athabasca at present. He came by Hay River, having left Fort Rae on

January 5, so they had been three weeks coming, and that morning had been walking for four hours. But half my joy was yet to come. The Company's sledge meant an extra mail, and it had brought letters—dear, precious English letters for which I had so longed and prayed and wept for eight months past. I do not think that ever in my life I felt such a thrill of joy and gladness as when William poured them down upon my lap. How I cried and laughed and kissed my treasures and thanked God that my long night of waiting was over—that "joy had indeed come in the morning"! But there—I was forced to stop in the midst of my ecstasies, for there sounded the school bell, and my Sunday class had to be attended to, and then our church bell sounded, and we all started walking through the crisp snow, two and two, under the bright sunshine, towards the dear little church. How thankful one was at last to kneel down in peace and quiet and thank God for all His overflowing goodness to me. Then came the rest of our Sunday duties—a hurried dinner—the Indian afternoon service and English Evensong. At the Indian service I stood sponsor to a mother and her two sons who came to be baptized. Mr. Reeve, the chaplain, read the service solemnly, and I was very thankful as I led the three up to the font. Poor little lads! The mother had done her best to make them, as well as herself, neat and presentable, but Indian faces have a perverse habit of griminess, and Indian hair is ever thick and shaggy and rough, especially in times like the present when grease is scarce. The font looked pretty with the heap of snow in it, so pure and foamy, put to melt during the service, and it was only melted just in time for the baptism. It is only a temporary font, for, strange to say, our

cathedral has never yet been provided with a proper one, though we hope it will soon be forthcoming. Now, our three services ended, we return home, and I may think of my letters. They had been with me all day, and now I might open and read them. Thank God! I had no misgiving now, as I had had so much of late, as to the tidings they might bring me. My heart was too full of joy and thankfulness to find room for any other feeling, and so one after another of my treasures was opened and devoured.

February 9, 1875.

We are getting on through this month, which here is wonderfully bright and cheerful. People are beginning to talk of spring as if it were really at hand, and the days are lengthening rapidly. How little I have suffered from this my first winter of intense cold compared with what I endured from the heat and the mosquitoes! I shudder even now to look upon those three summer months of suffering. I have had peaceful days since William's return home. These Indians, like all savage tribes, despise women. They call them among themselves "the creatures," and will not submit to a woman's sway, so my household was disorganised, and Jacob was growing more and more insubordinate. It was time for the master to return, and he has put things to rights, and the peace and quiet is most refreshing.

February 12, 1875.

The chief event of the past week has been the arrival of a number of Dogrib Indians from Fort Rae, bringing sledges of moose meat and deer, and—oh, joy!—some grease. The men have been constantly in and out from early morning to between ten and eleven o'clock at night. One evening came the Chief

with three or four others. He was a very nice-looking man, and remarkably friendly and sociable. They walk straight in without knocking, and extend their hand for you to shake. I was just going to have some tea, having been suffering all day with a bad head-ache. We made the men welcome, and then all sat down—some on the benches, some on the floor—and I gave them tea and a barley cake all round. This made me immensely popular, and the next day one and another brought me bladders of grease and marrow—the former for candles and soap, the latter for cooking purposes. I paid them—some in tea, some in pieces of coloured braid. I got also one small bladder of pounded meat. They promise next time to bring me more meat and a deer-skin for shoes. Old Martha came in this morning just as we were going into school for prayers. I must try and draw this dear old Indian for you. Her quaint leather dress coming not much below the knee, and fringed all round. Her dark, grimy face and black tangled hair. The blanket-wrap is discarded now, for it is pronounced very warm —that is, two or three degrees above zero. Dear old thing! She squatted down on the ground while we had prayers, and then proffered her petition for some medicine for face-ache. William gave her some, and she went away satisfied.

February 15, 1875.

My Sundays are now fully occupied with first the Sunday school and then the three services—one English and two Indian—at all of which I play. The harmonium is at the west end of the church. I have the elder girls close to me, and find all their places, which requires quick work to be also in time with the music. A small Indian boy, "Mission Ned," stands

by me to turn over. I feel tolerably spent by the time evening comes, and only fit to simmer over a book by firelight.

February 18, 1875.

We had a nice little lecture last night from Mr. Hardisty on our cause for thankfulness for God's merciful provision for us. Truly His mercy has been very great.

Mr. Hardisty said that in order to increase our thankfulness to God for His merciful supply of our needs, we must realize what is the meaning of famine in this country. In India and elsewhere, as soon as such a calamity is made known, subscriptions are raised and supplies sent off as soon as possible, but here months and months must elapse before the tidings could even reach our friends in England, and in the meantime, to what extremities might we not be reduced! One shudders to think what men are driven to do by the pangs of hunger. There is an old Indian even now pointed out here who is said to have eaten his wife and children.

February 24, 1875.

I walked to an Indian camp to see the wife of our Indian "Moses" who has a bad throat. I thought it looked like quinsy, but she is better. She promises to send her boys, Frank and François, to school. They are my godsons. Another Indian wife came yesterday and brought me five of the sweet snow-white partridges. Pretty things! I do love to see them cowering down in the snow, only to be detected by their pretty black eyes. These partridges form a pleasant variety to our perpetual deer's meat. I am always glad to get any.

March 1, 1875.

Our Sunday school, which I started as soon as I came here, is a great success. The numbers still keep up, and the children enjoy coming. Mr. Hardisty came yesterday (Sunday) to take a class both morning and afternoon. The Bishop takes the Indian children after the Indian service in church. I have a nice class of little ones about five years old. My elder classes I have now in the week for Prayer-Book, reading, etc.

March 11, 1875.

No sign of the Packet as yet. Everyone is on the *qui vive,* and at the faintest sound of bells we rush to the window. Everyone records their experience of the various times at which the sledges have arrived during the past six or eight years.

March 15, 1875.

The sledge Packets are beginning to arrive. On Friday evening, about eight o'clock, came the sound of sledge bells. Everyone rushed out. It proved to be Mr. McDougall from Fort Liard. Yesterday came another from Fort Nelson. We are on the lookout now for the Fort Norman Packet, with which is to come W. Horn, one of the native catechists, and then, and then, we hope for the outside Mail Packet from Athabasca, which brings our English letters. Oh, how long it seems in coming! Mr. McDougall called on us on Saturday, an agreeable, gentlemanly man, with all the northern calm and quiet fully developed. He has been over here since 1862.

March 18, 1875.

The glare of the bright sun upon the snow begins to be most painful to the eyes. I have to draw down

the blinds in the sitting-room, as we used to do in Naples in the summer days.

March 19, 1875.

Good news this morning! A cow has calved, and two more are expected to do so this month, which means that I may soon hope for a little milk, a luxury which I have scarcely yet learned to dispense with altogether, and yet my allowance has been gradually dwindling away to nothing.

The Mail Packet comes not. Mr. McDougall, who arrived this day week, is weary of waiting for it, and returns to Fort Liard on Monday or Tuesday.

I went a charming walk yesterday through the woods, and discovered a new camp. You find this first by seeing the smoke curling through the trees. Then you come to sledges fastened up in the branches, and bundles of clothing, and pieces of deer's meat, etc. At last you come upon the "Lodge" itself, as it is called, which is just a cluster of long poles fixed in the ground with a number of skins sewn together all over them, leaving only an opening at the top for the smoke. The aperture for the door is on the side, covered usually with a blanket. These tents or lodges are really very warm, for a good wood fire is kept up in the middle. In the one we visited yesterday there sat an old Indian woman as shrivelled and grimy as it is possible to be. She was wrapped in rabbit-skins, with nothing on her head, her grey, frizzled hair flying about in all directions; you could not fancy that it had ever seen a comb! The old witch was fondling a small puppy, otherwise quite alone. She seemed pleased to see us. I talked to her a little and asked her to come to church, but she said she had to stay and watch her tent or the dogs would steal all her goods. The

poor dogs are dreadful depredators here. They get but scanty provision of food at the best, and work hard, drawing great sledges of wood each day, so it is not wonderful if they are rather given to thieving. They steal and eat our moccasins and any leather article they can lay hold of. Their scent for food is so keen that I have to be most careful where I keep the butter, etc., as they soon find out and make their way to any cupboard or shelf. A gentleman told me that once he had just had three fine Stilton cheeses out from England, but losing sight of them for a moment, they were gone, and for ever! The dogs had devoured every crumb.

Easter Monday, March 29, 1875.

The Mail Packet arrived on Good Friday—joy of joys, I had twenty letters! I must write all my answers now, so Goodbye Journal!

[This previous part of the Journal was sent from Fort Simpson in March, 1875, and was received at Babbacombe, August 30, 1875.]

Extracts from Mrs. Bompas's Journal. Fort Simpson, April, 1875—June, 1876

Fort Simpson.
April 15, 1875.

We have had some return of winter during the past few days; a heavy fall of snow and keen north wind. Before that it was beginning to thaw rapidly and the ground looked more black. I had not seen the face of Mother Earth since last November; it was all snow, snow, snow on the ground and houses. A pure surplice for the cathedral spire, and weighing heavily down

the boughs of the pine trees. Even beasts and birds all take their colour from the snow. We have white bears, white wolves, white rabbits—which are sometimes brought to me six or eight on a stick, and all frozen as hard as a stone—white partridges also. Either of these latter I am thankful to receive. The dried moose-deer, exactly like shoe leather, is to me a great trial. I have already broken two teeth over it, and with all one's craving for food in this cold climate I often get up from dinner nearly as hungry as I sat down to it. We can have but very little flour, and therefore get only about a taste of bread every other day. I feel, too, never having any kind of vegetable. I was actually dreaming of a dish of potatoes a few nights since! If we are spared to another year I trust we shall do better in this respect, for there is no reason why we should not raise enough to last us the whole winter. Indeed, it is a shame to complain of anything when our wants are so mercifully supplied. It is really disgraceful to think how I prize any little luxury—a pot of marmalade which lasted us from December to March, and a half-pound of butter, which, to my shame, I nearly cried over when it was stolen by the dogs. Poor creatures! Their only food is two fish a day.

Mr. Reeve left a few days before the Packet came for Fort Rae, where William has decided to form a new mission station in preference to Hay River, which he at first thought of.

April 19, 1875.

A number of Indians continue to arrive with deer and moose meat, and we have now a good supply of grease and tongues, which are most acceptable.

There have been two sad accidents during the past

week. One, the death of Maggie's baby—my little godson, old Martha's grandson and the brother of poor little Tommy, who died last winter. The cause of death was, we think, in the first instance, a fall from his sister's lap. He was very ill and seemed to suffer a great deal. The helplessness of these poor Indians in case of any illness is distressing. They will watch and kiss and fondle and cry out in agony, but not stir to provide the least remedy, and if you give them medicine, the chances are they will not use it. I went down late one evening and applied hot fomentations to the little body, which seemed to soothe it somewhat, but he drooped and died after only two days' illness. We buried him on Sunday evening (the custom here is always to bury the day after death). It was a touching sight. About thirty people attended. First came a number of the workmen, who carried the little coffin each in turn; then almost all our school-children, four of whom held the corners of the white pall I had thrown over the coffin. These were followed by a number of Indian women, and among them poor old Martha, whose grief at the death of another grandson is very real and deep. Our walk to the church was easily effected, as it was along the beaten track, but on leaving the church to proceed to the little grave our difficulties commenced. The graveyard is some way from the church, and the snow lay thick and untrodden, in many parts three or four feet deep. It was a grievous scramble, and it took us some time to reach the grave. From time to time I saw the Bishop's white surplice in front of me, then came a plunge and I lost sight of all but his head, the rest being buried in snow. At last, however, the spot was reached, the little coffin laid in the grave, and the

beautiful service concluded. After which one of the Indians presented a long pole, and Martha affixed to it some long streamers of scarlet cloth and stuck it into the ground to mark the spot in true Indian fashion. We then dispersed and scrambled home as best we might, being both frozen and starved, for it was nearly seven o'clock and we had had a hard day's work. We had taken the three full services besides two classes of Indians, and then the funeral.

The other sad incident was the death of a young Indian woman. She was a widow with one child. One morning she went out taking a piece of dried meat with her, and it was supposed she must have choked herself, as she was heard to utter a kind of cry and then ran round a few paces and fell. They sent up directly for the Bishop, but she was dead before he could reach the camp. I went down a few hours later and heard the Indian wail, which is truly pitiful. There was the tent of poles with fir boughs interlaced and a blanket hung at the entrance. On the ground lay the body of the young woman, dressed as usual, and only a piece of flannel thrown over her face. By her side, crouching near the fire, was her mother, a very witch to look upon, from time to time uttering a most piercing, thrilling wail of grief, "My child, my child!" etc. Then would come a pause, and she would turn to the corpse and apparently harangue it, speaking so low and fast that it was quite impossible to understand a word she uttered. After this the poor old thing would turn to the fire, light her pipe and smoke in apparent calmness for some time, when the wail was resumed. In the meantime the father, sisters, or any friend who came in sat round the fire and moaned in sad, subdued tones. Poor creature! I am

wondering who will take care of her little girl whom she has so often brought up to me. They say it was deliberately discussed at her birth whether, being a girl, she should not at once be made away with, but the grandfather interposed to save her. A few years ago a great number of female children were put an end to as soon as born, and even now there are women about the Fort who are suspected of having done so to one or two of their infants.

April 23, 1875.

. . . My loneliness sometimes seems very great. I tell myself to work harder and not to brood or despond. I want to live a higher, more spiritual life, and then I should not feel lonely. The early, warm days of spring make one feel languid and much depressed.

Yesterday I resolved to give my Sunday School children the treat which I had been promising them since Easter, but had postponed for various reasons. I made them all assemble at 2.30, about sixteen in number, and then we started for the hillside beyond the river. The track was very good in most places, though here and there rather soft. Allan, our catechist, came with the sledge drawn by four dogs to carry the provisions, kettles, and hatchets to cut down wood, etc. After a good walk we reached the top of the hill close to a pretty fir wood. Allan soon cut enough brushwood for me to sit upon, and then lighted a good fire, round which all gathered and sang some rounds and songs which I had taught them. Then the children wandered about until the kettle boiled. Query: How did we get the water? Why, a large piece of pure snow was stuck on to a pole before the fire, and so left to drop into the kettle. It was

nearly an hour before the snow melted and the kettle boiled. The feast I had prepared was pounded meat with lumps of grease (when I speak of grease you will remember it is just like English lard when very white), also barley biscuits and jam which I had made from the wild berries, and tea and milk. The children all ate and enjoyed it very much, and I think it was a success. Then we sang "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," which sounded beautiful through the wood. After this we started homewards, some of the little ones going by turns in the sledge.

May 1, 1875.

To-day, May 1, we have had hard snow all day. The spring occupations here are violent wood-hauling for the summer consumption, as the river, which they cross to reach the wood, will soon be thawing and impassable for the sledges. The pleasant jingle of the sleigh bells is heard at all hours of the day, and great stacks of wood rise up before our house. Another object of interest is looking out for the wild geese, as a few flocks fly this way on their journey south. Our sportsmen are busy preparing their guns.

May 10, 1875.

Last week was to me one of much sad suffering from headaches, of which I had three severe ones in succession. I began at last to fear I was in for an attack of illness, my poor brain was in such a state. The worry was that on Monday we had asked Mr. Hardisty and another of the Hudson Bay officers to come in for the evening, and I had prepared a nice little repast, and then could not be present, but had to spend my evening groaning and moaning. My

sufferings have been great, and I feel now very weak and shaken—better soon, I trust, D.V.

There has been great excitement, for the first geese have been seen. The whole Fort turned out, and everywhere you hear imitations of the geese's cry in order to attract them. They are later than usual this year. It is so refreshing to see the face of Mother Earth again, and young leaves, wild geraniums and violets and lovely mosses. I am told there are lovely wild flowers here, which is a pleasure I hardly dared look for. The long evenings now are most enjoyable. I seldom light the candles until nine o'clock. The days lengthen three and a half hours in three months. It is quite wonderful how the sun seems to make up for lost time. Everyone is busy and active, and the early mornings are so bright and lovely.

A touching incident occurred last week which I must relate.

There has been a little Indian girl about the neighbourhood of the Fort who has often attracted my interest and admiration. She came here last autumn, and was once or twice at my Indian singing class. Jeannie de Nord is an unusually pretty specimen of an Indian child—her age about ten years—her complexion scarcely darker than that of an English gipsy, with healthy-looking rosy cheeks, and the brightest of bright eyes. A rogue she looks, and a rogue she is, up to all sorts of fun and mischief, a specimen of which she exhibited last week. Jeannie's father is in camp some distance from here, and the child herself was sent to stay with an aunt who is encamped not far off. This aunt is rather a hard woman, and does not seem to have been very kind to little Jeannie. At all events, the child was neither happy nor contented,

and last Friday morning she started from her aunt's camp, pretending she was only going for wood.

That day Jeannie never came back, nor the next day either. Neither the aunt nor her husband seemed to concern themselves much about her, although they must have known that the child had not a morsel of food with her, nor even her blanket for a covering at night. Moreover, at this time of year wolves are often wandering about in a state of starvation, and if the little girl had fallen in with one of them, there would have been but a poor chance for Jeannie. On this Saturday morning I heard the story of the escapade from some Indians whom I went to visit on the occasion of the death of Bob's wife. I immediately reported it to the Bishop, who determined to send someone at once after the child. Not feeling quite satisfied in his messenger, he afterwards started himself in pursuit. I waited until one o'clock for supper, expecting the Bishop's return, and then the truth began to dawn upon me. It is true he had come in for his snowshoes and some fresh duffle socks, but otherwise he was in no way accoutred for such an expedition. However, one could only earnestly commend him to God's protecting care, and wait in patience and faith. After all, it did seem right that the shepherd should go and seek for the little straying lamb and bring her back, as I trusted, to more kind and loving care than she had known hitherto. So I retired to bed and fell asleep.

Between three and four o'clock in the morning (Sunday) I started up, hearing a noise at the front door. There was William, to my great relief, but in such agonies from cramp that it was frightful to see him. He had been obliged to wade through snow

streams and walk for miles with his clothes soaking wet ; the wonder is that he got home at all ! It was a fearful risk to run without even his warm cloth leggings or any single wrap. And what about the little truant ? Had they found her ? Yes, indeed, after a walk of about twelve miles. Fortunately Jeannie had taken her snowshoes, so there was her track to follow the whole way.

She had walked on the river for ten or twelve miles, and then turned into the wood and found an old deserted tent of her father's. Groping about with her wonderful far-seeing Indian eyes she came upon a gun belonging to him, but which he had hidden in a tree. The child got it down, and by means of it made a fire for herself, and then collected brushwood on which she lay down to sleep, not having tasted food since the morning. The next day Jeannie rose and started breakfastless in search of her father, who, she felt sure, could not be far off. But in vain she wandered and called, the old man was many miles away. Having walked the whole day in pursuit of him, the little girl returned, most happily for William, to the same old tent to sleep. That night, between ten and eleven o'clock, she was roused from her sleep by the sound of guns fired by the Indians who accompanied the Bishop, and who fired to attract Jeannie's notice. But being fired towards the mountains, the sound was driven back, and came upon the child's ear as from the opposite direction—the one towards which she was seeking her father. Making sure, therefore, that he was at hand and would soon find her out, the trustful little maiden settled herself down again to sleep, and when our weary travellers looked into the tent and called her by name, she only gave a sleepy, uncon-

scious answer, and turned herself on her brushwood, little knowing the painful efforts that had been made on her behalf. William says that she did seem pleased to see them, not altogether averse to food, having been for two days and a night without any—a fair specimen of Indian endurance !

They brought her back to Fort Simpson, and I have my eye upon little Jeannie, and hope to get her here to teach and train, though I fear so independent a young maiden will not take kindly to the restraints of indoor life.

[N.B.—Jeannie de Nord died four years after this under sad circumstances. Her father required very hard work of her. One day, returning from the woods with dogs and sledge, bringing in a deer her father had killed, she was taken ill. She lay down on her bed of brushwood, and died the next day.]

FORT SIMPSON.
February, 1876.

The Bishop heard that there were a great many Indians encamped about twenty miles distant from us, and as a number of the Fort hunters were going off in that direction, he resolved to take advantage of their escort and visit these Indians in their camps. I did not at the time realize that there was any difficulty or danger in his doing so. He is accustomed to take winter trips, and I am always afraid of hindering him in his work. However, it is clear, under the circumstances, that he ought not to have gone. The weather was intensely cold—on some nights lately the thermometer has stood at 50° below zero ; on the morning he started it must have been at 30°. Moreover, now, our dogs cannot

be spared for the sledge, as they are required daily for hauling wood ; and accompanying sledges on foot is a most exhausting business. Still, on the morning of February 15 he started—a cold, blowing, snowing day. I got up at five o'clock to secure him a good warm breakfast, and to see him well equipped. He always looks so handsome in his "tripper's" dress—that is, a coat of deer-skin, thick cloth leggings, and beaver cap, etc. Soon the sledge bells were heard, and one of the men came for the Bishop. His blankets and cooking implements were fastened on one of the sledges, and off they all went in good spirits.

I had felt somewhat anxious the evening before, and I sent a message to one of the Indians whom I knew, begging that he would look well after the Bishop and take good care of him, and I would make him a present when he came home. His answer was very characteristic : "Tell Yalti Betzani—is *he* not Bishop —and are *we* not men?"

For some miles, about ten or twelve, the Bishop kept up with the sledges and trippers ; then he seems to have become exhausted, and one of the men urged his getting on his sledge for awhile, and this he was persuaded to do, but being in a great heat from exercise, driving in that frozen atmosphere chilled him too rapidly, and he got out and walked again. He was soon lost sight of and left far behind, so far that at last the trappers began to feel uneasy, and it was resolved that one of them should be sent back to look after the wanderer. My good friend "Natsel," who sent me the message, was the one to go in search. He walked some distance without seeing any trace of the Bishop. At last he discovered his track, but with footsteps turned back towards the Fort ! Natsel

then thought there was something wrong, and he continued following the track. After long search my dear husband was discovered—helpless, powerless in the agonies of cramp. He appears to have felt it coming on, and so to have turned back, hoping to reach home. He had taken off his deer-skin and thick comforter, and tied them round his poor frozen limbs, but it was useless. I have seen him in one of these attacks of cramp, and they are indeed fearful to witness. At the time Natsel found him his condition was such that, I am told, a quarter of an hour more must have ended his life.

The good Natsel at once acted wisely. He gathered sticks and made a large fire, then rubbed and warmed the poor sufferer, and gave him hot water to drink. I think William had quite given himself up, and never expected to see wife or home again. It was very hard work to get him back, and only to be done by easy stages. Late in the afternoon of that day two men were seen coming across the river slowly and with great difficulty, one appearing to be a very old man, so that people pondered and speculated as to who it could be.

I was greatly startled to see William appear before me when I fancied him many miles away. I could not get him to bed that night; he could only lie on the ground by the stove fire, and was terribly restless and uneasy. It has taken him a fortnight to recover, and one of his poor, frozen arms seemed at one time on the very point of festering, but this, I hope, we have conquered.

My Indian choir goes on famously. I quite enjoy the practices. I have just taught them their first anthem in Indian: "I will arise and go to my Father."

We hope to have it in church to-morrow. I have just sent off Julie to clean out "her church"; this is her and my business every Saturday, and we glory in it. How I wish I could show you my little Indian handmaiden. She is becoming such a comfort to me, and I have trained and taught her very carefully. I am very thankful for her. She now reads and speaks English very fairly. Some of her ways and original expressions are most amusing. I am preparing her and two other Indian girls for Confirmation, and she introduces portions of the Church Catechism, especially "My duty towards my neighbours every one," while she is doing her housework, in an extraordinary way. Her thoughtfulness for me is so pretty: "Now you go away and have your quiet, and I sweep and clean well; you rest the head and not pother me," etc.

Tuesday in Easter Week.

Holy Week has come and gone, with all its solemn thoughts and services. We had very good congregations on Good Friday, and I practised both my choirs —English and Indian—diligently for Easter Day. I had my Sunday school class as often as the children could come in Holy Week, and we read and talked over the services of each day, singing "Lord, in this Thy mercy's day" on our knees.

We had a number of Dogrib Indians at the Fort in Holy Week, eighteen or twenty sledges, with a full complement of men and dogs. They brought us marrow and deers' tongues in abundance, so that our store has never been so well supplied. Some of the men came in to prayers, and seemed much interested. Most of them went into the Bishop's study, where he talked and read and prayed with them. The day

of their departure we went to the top of the bank to see them start on their return. It was worth seeing, for they mustered in large numbers close to our home; then off they went at full speed, shouting to their dogs at the top of their voices, the dogs seeming quite to enjoy the fun. As they passed the Bishop and myself, they one by one pulled up, drew off their gloves, as any English gentleman, and extended their hands for a final shake. Then off again down the bank full pelt, and on to the great broad, ice-bound river, where we watched them as far as eye could reach, losing sound of shouts and pretty sledge bells long before they vanished from our sight.

I always feel so very thankful for one's work here; without it existence in this country would be scarcely tolerable. Still, one is often depressed concerning the mission work, the disappointments are so great, and there is so much that is painful and unsatisfactory to contend with. One sad thing is that those Indians who live round the Hudson Bay Forts are always the worst specimens—that is, the greatest thieves and often gamblers.

We are getting our Indian services in church far more earnest and hearty. The Bishop gives them the prayers only, without any sermon. They behave much better—less like savages—than they used to do. They all stand now during the psalms and say out the creed nicely together, and they always chant the Gloria: *"E Tah Chu be Yazi chu Edaric nezo chu Mesaniti Goli de."*

June, 1876.

Dzekete, a small Indian girl, is seated on the floor of my room learning to work. Koa, another maiden,

is sewing in another part of the room, and Baby Jeannie, my wee Indian charge, is asleep in her swing, so I may say a few words to my Journal.

The rapidity with which the summer comes on here is quite wonderful. The ice only began to give way on May 13, and at that time, of course, snow lay thick everywhere, and by the end of the month the small gooseberry bushes were in blossom. All nature seems glad to doff her pretty white robes and to array herself in green, and the tender green of the larches is so delicious to look upon, varied with so little besides as they are here. Every bush round seems to bear promise of berries, and we walk on a carpet of wild strawberry blossoms. At a quarter to ten p.m. the sun sinks down almost in the same place where it rises, then follows our long beautiful twilight (there is really no night even now), and at two a.m. the dawn begins and birds chirp—one very like a thrush.

A great trouble and disappointment has come to me concerning my Indian servant Julie, in whom I have taken great interest for the last sixteen or eighteen months that she has been with me. She was becoming an excellent servant, and I thought very well of her in most points, but she left me a week or two since without any warning of her intention, and the worst of all is that she took with her many of my things, in true Indian fashion. I was greatly startled and grieved when this came out, as I hoped better things of my little maiden, but one has to remember that these are savages—wild Indian girls—who like their camps and wild camp life, in spite of all its miseries and privations, far better than the white man's home with its comparative luxuries and restraints. The Indian infirmities, too, are not easily overcome and uprooted.

Imagine my visiting her old mother's camp one day and seeing her brother decked out in some of my own things! I believe Julie will ere long become ashamed and penitent and ask me to take her back, which I do not mean to do. I think we ought to show our poor Indians that untruthfulness and dishonesty are not to be so lightly regarded as they fancy.

Meanwhile I am left in a servantless condition except for our two men, Jemmy the Louchou, our wood hauler, and Natsel, the man who rescued the Bishop in that perilous condition of cramp. It is the more perplexing as I have the three little Indian children, and Jeannie, the wee baby, demands very much care and attention, as she is a fragile little thing, albeit a sweet bairnie. But God gives me strength for the day, and I am often surprised when bedtime comes to think how much I have been enabled to get through.

The Bishop has resolved on moving his headquarters from Fort Simpson to Athabasca. He thinks this is desirable for many reasons, and it holds out some advantages to me, but the undertaking is a formidable one, as it involves for me a canoe journey of some weeks without my husband. He must go to Peel River and the Yukon this summer, where Archdeacon Macdonald has more than fifty candidates awaiting confirmation, and he will not be able to return until late in the autumn. This, I feel, is the greatest trial of our mission life. The hardships and roughness weigh lighter far than these doleful separations, when we must necessarily be for months without a line of intercourse, and which make me feel more than ever the immense distance which involves the long, dreary silence of my dear ones at home.

The Bishop will start for the north a week or ten

days before I proceed south. He is doing all that can be done to provide for my welfare and comfort.

Extracts from Letter to her Sister Julia Darmstadt

Fort Simpson.
June 19, 1876.

I should be more troubled about my letters than I am, but that I really hope to be able to write in the boats, in which we shall be for three weeks or a month on our way to Athabasca. And now you partly see what makes me so busy; all the house here to be packed, as a great many of our things and all the furniture we leave behind. Probably William will bring them next year. Then other packing to be got through, and a heap of needlework, besides plenty of Indians sick and others wanting looking after. With all this, my dearie, I am in the happy condition of no maidservant, only one man—Jemmy the Louchou—to cook and draw water for us. For some time I had no help at all, and as I have a little baby to attend to, it did come rather hard, and Bishop's wife—"Yatte Dzeke"—had to be general servant to the mission.

Well, my dearest, I seem to be sinking into the general uninteresting topic of servants, which I do not intend to do, only I must answer you a little by the account of my charwomen—*i.e.*, I did, after much trouble, persuade Feneba's wife to spare Clintso, her second daughter, about nine years old, for a few hours each day. Picture to yourself a small, rough-headed maiden, clad in deer-skin dress, shoes, etc. She suddenly appears at the window and taps for me to tie up

Tutsi, my small dog, who objects to her, then in she comes and assures me she is hungry, so I sit her down on the floor and ply her with deer's meat, and perhaps a barley biscuit. When she is satisfied, which is not for a considerable time, I sign to her (for my Indian consists mostly of signs) to take Baby Jean, which she does, holding the poor child in the most extraordinary positions, and insisting on following me wherever I may be going. Clintso will stand the nursing part of her duties for a short time, but when Baby gets tired of her wonderful attitudes and begins to cry, she—Clintso—brings her to me, and, holding her out, says: "Na take," with a loud voice, and if I take her, she disappears like a shot and does not return till she feels inclined. What a queer creature it is! When she does return she will have her hands full of dragonflies, which she has seized and killed for my benefit. She will detect the smallest insect, and never rest until she has secured it. Clintso seldom comes alone. Two or three or four small creatures are her almost constant attendants, and these, too, have to be fed and looked after, so that I sometimes fancy the small helper brings more work than she saves me.

Well, my other "charwoman" is Koa, a nice, rosy-faced girl of about seventeen. She consented to come to me for three weeks, as I was so in want of help, on my agreeing to pay her eight skins. So, glad enough I was to get her, and she appears (a maiden of dignity, I assure you) at eight or nine or ten o'clock as the fancy takes her. Yesterday the fancy did not take her till very late—nearly eleven—so in spite of my two helpers, I have to do most of the work myself. "Now, Koa, go sweep my room chittie, chittie, quick." But Koa stirs not. Try another task, think

I. "Please, Koa, wash cups, plates, etc." Still Koa remains immovable, with a very sulky expression on her face. At last, after considerable time, there slowly issues the word "Tewdi"—I am hungry, which means to imply "I'll do nothing till you feed me." So off I go again for deers' meat and tea, and am only too thankful when Koa has eaten herself into good humour, and sets to work with a will to sweep and dust and sew, all of which she does capitally when she has a mind.

It is about 500 miles, you know, to Athabasca, so I suppose we shall be three weeks or a month getting there. The trial is having to take this journey without William, but he was obliged to go up to the Yukon, and could not possibly get back before our boats start, so he will have to come on in a canoe in the fall, as there are no boats after these leave. Mr. Garrioch, however, a deacon, comes with me; he is very kind and brotherly. We shall be about twelve boats altogether, carrying as our chief cargo all the splendid collection of furs which the Indians have been bringing in all winter. These they have been hanging out to air before my windows for some days. Splendid great bear-skins, black and red fox, marten—*i.e.*, sable, and lynx, and mink, and beaver. One looks at them with interest, wishing that they could write their history. How many of these will be driving in Rotten Row, or sauntering through the Jardin des Plantes? How few who wear them will ever give a thought to the poor Indian and his life of misery and privation—to him who with stealthy footsteps tracked the marten, or with courage faced the danger of the great bear's hug in order to wrap dainty shoulders or languid limbs of fair West-end ladies!

CHAPTER III

Athabasca
(1876—1877)

Extract from Letter to her Sister Julia

St. Peter's Day, June 29, 1876.

The scene has changed from home to the boats *en route* for Athabasca. We started Tuesday morning. Such a business getting off I can hardly describe, and my room thronged with Indians, wives and men, to the last, all wanting something—*i.e.*, medicine, or a "make of tea," or a little flour, or any small remembrance. It was hard to pack under such circumstances. Then there was a grand gathering on the river bank of Indians and white people to see the boats start, and then a universal hand-shaking and occasional kissing, and then the signal was given, and we started. And now you must try to picture the scene, for it is a pretty one. There is the beautiful wide river, with its swift, swift current, and high banks on either side, just now covered to the foot with beautiful shrubs in full bloom, soon to be laden with berries, also abundance of wild roses and other flowers. Now you catch sight of eleven portage boats in full sail when the wind is favourable, at other times either rowed by our crew of eight men, or "tracked," —*i.e.*, drawn by four or five men with ropes. There is the first boat in which sits the Master—*i.e.*, Mr.

Hardisty, chief officer of the Hudson Bay Company —then comes another with Mrs. Hardisty and family, then others in succession, among which you notice the Mission Boat, where is seated in the stern-sheets Mrs. W. C. Bompas holding small Jeannie on her lap.

"Lipimy," the head steersman, takes the lead in everything, and steers and masters boat. He calls us up in the morning with a loud *"Lève! Lève! Lève!"* Times our starting in the morning (at four o'clock), and the halt for each meal—eight a.m., one and eight p.m., the last being supper and camping time which we all welcome with delight, being, as you may fancy, rather tired of our boats when we have been in them nearly sixteen hours. We are called, as I said, a few minutes before four o'clock, and about ten minutes after, my tent man appears and begins most unceremoniously taking down the tent, so that all my toilet has to be performed at night. I wish you could see my tent, it is so pretty and comfortable. I am very fond of it. One of the crew acts as our cook. Our breakfast consists of salted deers' tongues and tea, dinner of dried meat and tea and biscuits, supper of pemmican (which is very good), biscuit or "bangs"—as the Indians call what is just the fried batter cakes which you advised me to make, and which are very popular among us—and the everlasting tea. Now I think you know all about our tripping experiences. I hope that *vous n'en êtes pas fatiguée?*

Our daily routine is varied when we reach any of the Forts, where we are hospitably entertained by the officers and their wives. Just at present the heat has not been unbearable, but I fear it is likely to increase as we get on. The mosquitoes are terrific. My poor little Jeannie is almost maddened by them. I have to

spend a great part of the day in driving away the enemy from her face, hands, etc. I am ashamed of the untidy appearance of my letter, dearest, but you must excuse, as I write under difficulties, and since I began this page a thunderstorm has come on, which is responsible for these blots; still, it has cooled the air, which is a blessing, and now we are all hoping for a fair wind in order to hoist sails.

These poor Indians are no great hands at rowing, and it is pitiable to see the state of exhaustion they get into, and then there is the pleasing anticipation for them of five portages close together before they get to their journey's end, and in three or four of these not the whole cargo only, but the eleven boats themselves have to be carried across the land to the next starting-place on the river.

Saturday, July 1, 1876.

We are having regular July weather—namely, heat and scorching sun and then thunderstorms. Such a storm we had yesterday! In our open boat it is not pleasant. We had to heave to and all creep under some oil-cloths which are kept in every boat to defend the precious furs, and which really helped to keep our less precious selves dry. To-day the air is lightened, and, a fine breeze having sprung up, we are sailing, which is just delightful. To-morrow, Sunday, we hope to reach the rapids "Fort Providence," so we may look for a quiet day and one service, at least, from the Deacon. There is a French Sisterhood there, and I hear they have a most beautiful harmonium which I am planning to go over and play. I fear my poor little instrument has come to grief in the boat; it is impossible to keep the men from treading on it.

FORT RESOLUTION,
GREAT SLAVE LAKE.
Friday, July 7, 1876.

We got to this post this morning, after sailing all night. Dr. Mackay, Officer-in-charge, and his wife are very nice and kind. We do not fare much better than in the boats, except that here we get a little fish and some milk. We are to stay here until Monday, so I shall enjoy a quiet Sunday, and Mr. Garrioch will hold services, and I shall spend part of the day in simmering over some of my dear sisters' letters.

I shall try and send you an Indian air which I partly arranged, and with which I sing little Jeannie to sleep. It was sung, I presume, impromptu, by an Indian who "died, and, after some time when men had made medicine, he came to life again!" I tell you this as it was told to me.

EXTRACTS FROM MRS. BOMPAS'S JOURNAL FROM JULY—NOVEMBER, 1876

SLAVE LAKE AND ATHABASCA.
July 8, 1876.

A pleasant three days' sail to Slave Lake, but such a bitterly cold north wind. I could hardly manage with all my wraps to keep myself from freezing. This was followed by a boisterous, rainy night, when one's tent is not so pleasant, as it gets perfectly sodden and the eaves blow up, which invites some of the countless dogs to enter, one of whom, I was roused to find, was actually eating with relish the porridge of my Indian baby, and another lying soaking wet on my dress. Then came a bright day with pleasant sailing, which was encouraging—the wind continuing so fair that it

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was decreed we should keep on late and start very early. Under these circumstances it is best to sleep in the boat, which I did, and was hardly conscious when we moved off again at 3.30 a.m. I was roused, however, by an immense stir amid the crew soon after six o'clock. Something exciting was at hand and I sprang up at the words "La Real—La Real!" The cause of the excitement I soon perceived, for swimming across the lake (which at this part is very narrow) was a fine moose deer. Poor thing, it had nearly reached the centre of the water, so the excitement in the two boats which were nearest was waxing tremendous, everyone seizing and loading their guns, and in the meantime steering towards the poor swimmer, who I hoped still might escape. The other boat got the start of ours and, getting quite close to the deer, one of the crew stabbed it with a large knife tied on to a stick. To describe the cries and hurrahs of all the men would be impossible. By this time the boats were close together and the crews helping to raise the poor creature into the boat. I suppose it was dead, for it offered no resistance, and the water was reddened by its blood.

ATHABASCA.
August, 1876.

We reached Athabasca (which word means "the meeting-place of many waters") in the early morning of a beautiful day towards the end of July, and were most kindly welcomed by the Head Officer at the Fort (Fort Chipewyan) and his wife, who gave us a dinner of fresh meat and stewed apples—luxuries long unknown!

The lake is very picturesque, with small islands dotted on its surface, reminding me somewhat of the

coast of Argyleshire. The Hudson Bay Fort stands high on a rock, and is the principal house in the colony, which consists of ten or twenty wooden dwellings occupied chiefly by the officers and clerks.

The Mission House is not yet finished, and, what is worse, the church not yet begun, but wood is being collected for the latter and we hope to watch its progress. The "Bishop's Palace" *pro tem.* consists of a small tenement with one large room out of which a ladder leads up into a small attic.

I did the best I could to make it habitable, and placed the cooking stove in the yard enclosed in a skin tent or lodge. I find this a great comfort, and wonder why people at home in want of space do not make use of lodges.

Mr. Garrioch, who travelled down with me from Fort Simpson, is appointed to Fort Vermilion, Peace River, south-west of Slave Lake, where the Bishop thinks there is a good opening for mission work. When he goes we shall have no resident clergyman. I am anxiously longing for my husband's return from the very far North. Meanwhile, I find plenty of occupation, and I have undertaken the school daily until we get a master out from Red River. It is held in a small, wooden shanty; there are not many children at present, but among them I have chosen a few promising boys for a choir, and we have already started some chants in the service—quite a new thing for the Chipewyans.

The work here is very unsatisfactory so far. The Indians are all of the Cree or Chipewyan tribes and are for the most part Romanists. There is a French Mission House just beyond the Fort, with some priests and sisters who work very energetically. It is

a very great thing in the work when it is carried on, not singly, but even in small handfuls of earnest-hearted workers together. Oh, that we had some men and women from England ! I will not say who do "no work," but where perhaps work is not so urgently needed as it is here. There is but a sprinkling of white people and half-breeds here, and there are Presbyterians.

October.

I am settled into our house with the little Indian babe whom I brought all the way from Fort Simpson. I think it will be comfortable, but it was hastily finished and is very cold. I have fitted up the largest room as a temporary chapel. A schoolmaster is come out from Red River and reads the service very reverently. Still, one's soul faints for something more, and I have to remember that Daniel prospered upon pulse. I am weary of looking in vain for the boats which are to bring the Bishop.

My Indian girl, Theresa, is improving, but she has given me much trouble. She was about the very worst girl at Fort Simpson, and, therefore, I brought her away with me. My husband feels that it is such we should select, and strive to civilize and train to higher influences. She is very spiteful and jealous, and has conceived such a jealous hatred for my dear little Indian babe that I dare not leave Jeannie with her. The dear babe is still very delicate and has needed constant watching and care ever since she came to me a year ago. Still, she has been a great blessing and comfort to me, and I know not what I should have done on some of these long dreary nights without her little hand patting my face, and her bright little face cheering many an anxious hour. She has given me

many a sleepless night, from which I doubt my poor eyes ever recovering, and the more trouble she gives me, the fonder I seem to get of her. I have now also a little boy under my charge—a small Raphael—a half-breed. His father—a man from Lewis—is away at the Fishery, and the child was learning all sorts of evil and bad Cree ways.

November.

We have been living for the last three months only upon fish, under which I was thinner daily. The Indian hunters will soon, I hope, come in with some moose deer.

The other day I had a message from a Cree woman: "Tell big Minister's wife that my husband killed a 'Tzas' (beaver), and I will give it to her for that petticoat she had on the other day, and if she will be good to me, I will be faithful to her all the winter, and when kill bear or beaver and make grease I always give her some."

So my good woman had the skirt and I had the beaver, on which I bid some others to feast with me.

Our Cree Neighbours, or the Story of the Red Shawl

Most of the Indians who visit this Fort are Chipewyans. Their hunters bring us our meat and most of the furs to the Company. In the summer and fall a number of Chipewyans arrive in canoes from the different islands, bringing berries, which we are only too glad to purchase to turn into preserves, and so add to our winter stock of dainties. An old stuff petticoat or shawl, still more, a pound of tea, will buy a

whole roganful of these berries, the rogans being kind of baskets skilfully constructed out of bark, and of different shapes and sizes.

But, besides these Chipewyan visitors, we have a sprinkling of Crees coming from Saskatchewan, having drifted on from time to time in pursuit of food from their original habitation.

The characteristics of the Crees are altogether different from the other tribes around us. Their faces exhibit a great deal more intelligence. They are more slightly made, and, for the most part, better looking than the Chipewyans, but Crees of all ranks are proverbially light-fingered, and many of them are incorrigible thieves. The Chipewyans often steal *food,* but beyond this they do not bear a bad character.

My acquaintance with "Madeline," my Cree neighbour, began last fall in the following manner: The fish-boat, which usually appeared every morning bringing us our daily provision of white fish, had been detained by stormy weather, and, in consequence, we were short of "prey." In other words, we had nothing for dinner. This generally involved a visit to some of the camps, where by dint of a little coaxing and the promise of some tea or sugar I seldom failed to secure a fish or two. But on the present occasion I was rather unfortunate. All the camps were bare and the Indians somewhat cross, as is often the case; they wanted nothing for the moment, and, in consequence, they had no object in being obliging. Theresa, my little Cree maiden, was disgusted, and I myself somewhat dispirited, as we turned away with the prospect of no dinner but a cup of tea and some biscuits.

But there was still one more camp we had not

visited, and to my maiden's great delight the inmates turned out to be Crees. "Have you got a little fish to spare, or anything you can sell us?" she began again. "We have missed our prey and have nothing for supper."

A bright good-tempered-looking woman was seated in the tent surrounded by a number of little, grimy, black-eyed children; for a moment she looked doubtful, and I thought we were going to meet with another refusal.

Then suddenly an impulse of pity seemed to seize her and she bent towards the fire and took up a fine duck which was roasting on an extempore spit, and, handing it to us, said: "There, I feel pity for you, take the duck I was roasting for my supper. When my husband kills beaver you shall have some." Of course, we bore away our duck in triumph and feasted on it with thankfulness.

That evening "Cree wife," as she was always called among us, came up to the Mission to be paid, for you must clearly understand that when an Indian talks of "giving" he does not do so at all in the same sense in which we should take it, but expects the full value of his gift to be paid him then, or at some future period. But my little Cree was not unreasonable in her demands; a trifle satisfied her as payment for the duck, and from that time she became our general purveyor, and helped us in many little ways when I required assistance. The beaver which she had promised us was duly killed and brought us in course of time; then came rogans full of berries, and after these moss, that soft dry moss which is so universally used by the housewives in this country, and the comfort and cleanliness of which to lay

young infants in has only to be tried to be appreciated.

At one time I found that I was running deep into debt with the Cree wife, and I had to insist on her telling me what she was in want of as payment. Then came the usual Indian shy laugh of assurances that she wanted nothing—all of which I took, of course, for what they were worth, and I found that she afterwards confided to my little handmaid that she had no shawl. So a shawl I must rout out for her at whatever cost, for an Indian takes in a remarkably bad grace your refusal to supply him with any article he may fix his mind on.

Shawls—new shawls—I had none, and of other—more or less worn, I had—yes, I had one ; but I shrank from parting with it. It was a real old friend—such as shawls, more than any other article of dress, will become. As I held it up in the light, and recognized the fact, for the first time revealed to me, that its best days were over, its colour a little—just a little—faded, and then looked back over the space of years which had gone past since that shawl was given to me, I felt a clinging to and fondness for it not to be described, and which, as I told myself at the time, was simply childish. The dear home-look and smell were still about it, and how could I part with such an old friend and treasure? No ! I folded it up and laid it back in the box from which now it seldom moved. I resolved that while life lasted, my old red shawl and I should never part ! But my mind was not comfortable that evening, nor my heart at rest. In fact, I and myself got into a small controversy on the matter, which I am glad to say ended by the shawl being again taken out of its seclusion and handed over to the Cree wife

as payment for certain rogans full of berries, and sundry odd jobs of work which she did for me when they were required.

I see my old friend frequently even yet, though it has already a far more shabby appearance than when I parted with it. Madeline wears it with a style of her own, low down on her shoulders and surmounted by a red and yellow silk handkerchief on her head, which is very becoming. It has been washed and torn and mended, and at times handed over to one of the children—a small girl some eight years old, who wears it in would-be-imitation of her mother, with half a yard of it trailing on the ground. Lately it has been wrapping up a newborn infant. Soon I may expect to see it used as a swing or hammock for the said baby, tied up to the boughs of a tree, or suspended in their tent or "skin lodge." What will be the next stage of shawley's existence it would be hard to conjecture, but I think it may be said even now to have done its work and to have fulfilled its task of ornament and usefulness, and I do not myself regret the second thoughts which prompted me to give instead of keeping it—believing that it behoves us missionaries to seek more than others for the spirit of divestment.

Just at Christmas (1876) I fell ill. My husband was away on a missionary journey; my Cree handmaiden, like many Indians, took fright at my illness, and would hardly come near me. Thus alone and untended, I passed some days of acute mental and physical suffering, but I cried loud for help to the dear Saviour, and He delayed not long to come to my rescue. It was one morning when I had passed a suffering and almost sleepless night and I was betaking myself to that worst of consolations—a hearty cry—

when a low tap was heard at my bedroom door, and on its being opened, who should appear but my little Cree friend.

Yes, there she was, with smiling good-tempered face, the red shawl, folded square, upon her shoulders, a new yellow silk handkerchief tied jauntily on her head. At first Madeline seemed inclined to be playful, but I suppose the sight of my suffering countenance and swollen eyes checked her mirth.

She came and stood at my bedside, and said, in kind, almost remonstrating tones : "You are ill ; why not send for me? I work for you ; I do anything for you ; scrub house for you ; wash clothes for you ; nurse baby for you !"

Oh, how can I describe my feelings of joy and thankfulness at this sudden and unlooked-for help ! I could only take that small dark-coloured hand in mine and stroke and press it while I thanked God for putting it into this poor woman's heart to come to me in my extremity ; and I had, in the days following, full proof that my friend was sincere in her offers of assistance.

My greatest source of anxiety and trouble now arose from the sickness and constant wakefulness of my little Jeannie, and then my own brain seemed reeling from want of sleep. If I could get Jeannie soothed and comforted for a few hours, I might snatch a little sleep myself and so be better able to tend her again. And I had but to say a few words to make the Cree wife understand what I wanted her to do.

That evening, soon after six o'clock, in she walked, evidently prepared for night work, with pillow and blanket, which she proceeded to spread upon the floor. Then, stepping quietly to my side, she took my little

Jeannie from me. I was hardly conscious from that moment. The feeling of mental relief was such that I must have sunk off almost instantly into the sleep I so greatly needed, and through that night all was peaceful and quiet. Only once did I awake to consciousness, and the picture before me was so pleasant that even in my weariness and exhaustion I was fain to look upon it again. My little "wife" was seated on the floor and whistling in the softest way between her teeth some wonderful military march kind of air, while Jeannie, newly wrapped in fresh moss, with shawls and flannels round her, was propped upright between blanket and pillow in a manner peculiarly Indian, and though wide awake, was perfectly calm and contented.

The glow of a bright wood fire lighted up the faces of the two; too happy and thankful even to utter a sound, I closed my eyes again and sank off into unconsciousness.

* * * * *

Extract from Mrs. Bompas's Journal

January 30, 1877.

I must now turn to another phase of our mission life—even the sad history of my dear little Jeannie's death. It may be wondered that I felt it so deeply, but so soon one learns to love these little ones, and from the first I viewed the Indian children as my especial charge.

This little motherless babe was brought to me on Christmas Day, 1875, and coming to me on such a day and under such circumstances I could not refuse the charge, in spite of all that it involved. I did everything for her myself, and I shall never forget her

moan whenever I left her, or her pretty chirp of joy when I returned. She was always very frail and delicate, but with unceasing care she struggled through the first year of her life until, just before my illness, she seemed drooping and a cough came—which assumed more and more of a consumptive character and indicated serious mischief at the lungs. I scarcely thought it possible that a fifteen months' old babe should be doomed to go through all the phases of that dire disease, but so it was, and she bore it most patiently. I gave her all the nourishing food I could devise, but all was in vain. The Bishop came in one day and read part of the service for the Visitation of the Sick by her cradle, which was a great comfort. In the beginning of January she had far more signs of vitality than I had myself, but yesterday—the Feast of the Purification—we laid the little one to rest, digging her tiny grave through the deep snow, most thankful that the little suffering life was ended, and that she is among those Holy Innocents out of whose sweet life Christ hath ordained praise.

* * * * *

Towards the middle of January my husband returned to me after more than seven months' absence. Then all grew brighter and my health improved, though a long period of great weakness followed.

The Bishop seems, on the whole, well satisfied with this last expedition; within these thirteen months he has taken in the whole breadth of the diocese from north-west to south-east, about 2,000 miles—passing over in going and returning at least double that distance, as he has been to all the mission stations and posts in the way. This visit to the Tukudh Mission,

presided over by Archdeacon Macdonald, and which comprises the Lanchoux tribes, was a very interesting one. He confirmed 133 candidates amongst them, and found the Indians increasing in religious knowledge and earnestness. The children are learning to read the Gospels in their own language, the Archdeacon having accurately translated them into Tukudh. There are 1,460 Christians amongst these tribes, and they have eighteen lay teachers who faithfully carry on the daily service, some of them keeping school daily with about forty pupils. The scarcity of provisions up there was very great, but wherever it was known that the Bishop halted to hold services and to administer the Holy Sacraments, the Indians came in eagerly from their hunting grounds, and all the services were well attended.

There are now mission stations at Forts Vermilion, Rae, Norman, McPherson, and Rampart House, besides Fort Simpson and Chipewyan. The Bishop gave an interesting Charge at the First Diocesan Synod held in September (1876) at Fort Simpson, and strongly urged extra exertions as to the erection of more churches in the diocese, and the immediate completion of those already begun, also as to organising a training institution for native teachers in the Far North.

CHAPTER IV

TWO JOURNEYS
(1877—1879)

ABOUT this time the Bishop said: "These extended travels prove inconsistent with domestic life, and Mrs. Bompas, being left alone in the rigorous climate, has lost her health from exposure to cold and insufficient food."*

Mrs. Bompas's strength had indeed been sadly impaired by her serious illness during the winter of the year 1876. It was essential that she should return for a time to civilized surroundings, and with the opening of navigation in 1877 she therefore started on her long journey of over 1,000 miles to Winnipeg. Of this trip she wrote in the C.M.S. *Gleaner,* January, 1878:

I am thankful to have come to the end of my long journey from Athabasca, which, by God's mercy, I accomplished with less fatigue than I anticipated. I met with much kindness on my way at the various mission stations, and also at the Company's Forts, and I visited many Indian camps where one seldom fails to meet with a hearty welcome. Sometimes I had prayers with some of the women and children in my tent. They seemed to like to come, and enjoy singing hymns . . . My boat's crew from Isle à la Crosse to Cumberland was composed of Stanley men,

* Archdeacon Macdonald in a letter to Archdeacon Cody. (See "An Apostle of the North," p. 181.)

and a more orderly, well-conducted set I never saw. They had a nice service every morning and evening among themselves, which I always attended. It consisted of a hymn, beautifully sung in parts, a few words of Scripture, and a few of the Church prayers. Some days the poor men were quite worn out with hard work at the portages, and for two days their provisions ran short and they were nearly starving, but they sang their hymn and had their prayers without fail, and when relief came in the shape of two canoes bringing bags of flour and pemmican, their shout of delight, I think, must almost have reached Salisbury Square.

I came with the Governor-General from the Grand Rapids. His Excellency and Lady Dufferin were kind enough to invite me to join their party, as they heard that I was anxious to get on. I am thankful to find all my powers gradually returning, and the state of woeful emaciation to which I was reduced giving way under the influence of milk and other luxuries, of which I was deprived in Athabasca. I deplore my having to leave my work so soon, but I earnestly trust in God's mercy to bring me back to it again in early spring.

[During this winter, 1877-1878, a terrible famine was being experienced in the northern home diocese, and the Bishop was most thankful that Mrs. Bompas was away. "Horses were killed for food, and furs eaten at several of the posts." This famine explains the delay in her leaving to return to the North until May 15, 1879.]

Extract from Mrs. Bompas's Journal describing Her Journey from Winnipeg to Fort Simpson, May—July, 1879

Fort Simpson,
Mackenzie River.
November 29, 1879.

We were a goodly party who started from Winnipeg on May 15 to commence our 1,500-mile journey across the prairies, by lakes and rivers to Athabasca. The weather was bright and beautiful, but cold enough to make us enjoy our equipment of winter wraps by day and deer-skin robes by night. Our party consisted of one deacon for Peace River, one farmer, and a schoolmaster, with wives and families, myself and companion. We travelled in spring waggons, and in our rear came the eighteen ox-carts conveying our supplies and luggage, three or four horses, one mare, and one cow, who, good creature, travelled her twenty miles daily, and yet failed not to yield us a good supply of milk every evening—a special boon for the little ones of our party.

Before leaving Winnipeg we had the comfort of a nice dismissal service conducted by Canon G. and others of the St. John's Cathedral staff. Holy Communion was celebrated, and a considerable number partook of the holy Feast. To say one felt no anxiety or excitement in starting on such a journey would not be quite correct. Might we dare to hope that such a party would pass safe and unharmed through so many difficulties and perils as we knew lay before us? Could we help shrinking a little from the cold which might be, and from the fierce heat which in the short summer of these northern regions visits us with truly tropical

rigour and severity? There were two more elements of discomfort in prospect—the rough roads, which, indeed, are not roads, but only tracks made by former travellers, trodden by countless oxen, and worn by heavily laden carts and waggons; these roads which at no time bear a very good character, were pronounced this year to be worse than ever owing to the recent rains which had fallen with unusual severity. The ruts were frequently more than a foot deep! The jolting one experienced was such that while lying in the back of my waggon I was frequently tossed up halfway to the roof of the same! Then there were swamps to be waded through, and pitiful it was to see how often the poor oxen stuck while trying to draw their heavy burdens through the swamps; but sticks and shouts and menace usually succeeded in the end, though on one occasion a poor ox died in the struggle, "all through stubbornness and obstinacy," as his driver declared. "Why need he go and put his head under the next cart, and so get his neck broken?" Even this misfortune, however, issued to our good, for the poor creature was soon cut up into beef, and made a welcome change from our salt pemmican.

Yet whatever faint-heartedness we may have had in starting, we soon picked up courage. With so many kind friends bidding us God-speed, and the remembrance of the Blessed Feast of which we had so recently partaken, we should have been sadly wanting in faith and trustfulness had we been otherwise than bright and cheery. It is singular how soon and easily, when once fairly off, one gets into the travelling routine, how possible, if not easy, it becomes to perform one's morning toilet in the little over five minutes from the moment when the "Lève! lève!" rouses

us from sound slumber, till the shaking and uprooting of one's tent pegs announces the removal of one's snug nightly shelter.

Our morning and evening services were very refreshing, Mr. G., the Chaplain of Peace River, conducting them. The morning prayers were frequently somewhat hurried, as our "freighter" would be standing by, whip in hand, ready and eager to be off, but in the evening, when once the horses were unharnessed and the tents pitched and fires lit, there was no need for haste, and we had our evening hymn, which sounded sweet and solemn in the deep silence of the prairies, and the prayers which so many of our dear friends had joined in at their Evensong some seven hours previously.

The scenery of the prairie is flat and monotonous, but the soil is for the most part excellent for farming purposes, although in some districts there is deficiency of water. The beauty and variety of wild flowers is truly wonderful. They formed a rich carpet on each side of us—a pleasing contrast to the rough roads on which we were jolted perpetually. The little ones of our party would often get out and gather rich bunches of flowers and bring them to me to adorn my waggon by day or my tent at evening. These flowers are wholly scentless, however, with the exception of the wild roses and a species of thyme. The leaves of the beautiful golden water-lily which grows in many of the swamps and streams are excellent as a vegetable when well cooked, not unlike spinach.

At one of our resting places where we camped for Sunday we had our first visit from some Indians. They came from the district where the renowned "Sitting Bull" holds his camp, and wore a tolerably

warlike appearance. They were heathen Indians and highly painted and feathered, with axes and tomahawks, etc. They came and shook hands with us, however, in a friendly manner, and seemed highly delighted with a present of tea and hard biscuit. They tied up their horses and came and sat down with us, smoking their peace pipe, which was handed round with all gravity and decorum. We showed them a few sacred pictures and spoke to them a little about the crucified Saviour, and they listened with apparent interest and wonderment. We noticed on one of their horses a drum, or rather tambourine, which is used in their horrid art of medicine making, one of their most objectionable conjuring practices, in which the Indian works himself up to a state of frenzy and excitement as singular as it is horrible to witness.

We reached Carlton about six weeks after leaving Winnipeg, and here our party divided, some of them proceeding by the plains to Peace River, which they hoped to reach in six or eight weeks from that time. The rest of us, after a few days' quiet enjoyment of the hospitalities of Mr. and Mrs. C., of Fort Carlton, resumed our journey, which from Green Lake would be continued by boats and canoes to Fort Simpson.

CHAPTER V

FORT NORMAN
(1881—1882)

Extracts from Mrs. Bompas's Journal. Fort Norman, June—July, 1881

Fort Norman,
North-West Canada.
June, 1881.

It is not often that I am permitted to accompany my husband on any of his more lengthened missionary journeys, for he deems the necessary privations, exposure and hardships far beyond my powers of endurance, although these have been very sufficiently taxed. This summer, however, circumstances combined to induce us to a temporary change of residence at a very northern station, and thus far I went with the Bishop on his way to a more remote part of the diocese.

Much is involved in the way of preparation for such an expedition. Every possible want which may occur in the way of provisions, clothing, furniture, etc., from chairs and tables to pins and needles, must be carefully anticipated. My library and medicine chest must be well stocked, chiefly for the benefit of the Indians among whom we may be thrown. Every department must be duly supplied, and this with much care and consideration, for the boat which will take us to Fort Norman is but a small Hudson Bay craft, manned

by eight or ten Red Indians, with a possible sail (should the wind be favourable), and this vessel must not be overloaded, nor must we make too great an inroad upon the Mission stores, from which seven other stations may have to obtain their supplies. However, we were quite ready to start when the day came. My dear many-sided husband had forestalled every want that could possibly occur during the next six months, and by his lawyer-like power detected at once every flaw in any arrangement which had seemed to me faultless. And now we are off, our willing, good-tempered boatmen pulling vigorously at their oars, at small credit, though, to themselves, for we are going down stream, and the current is running at the rate of five miles an hour.

We have with us two Indian children—little "Owinda," called May since her baptism, the youngest child of Nicktell, who shot his wife some twelve months since and left this poor little one on the river bank for seventeen hours, crying her life away, until she was rescued by some kind-hearted Indians who were passing in their canoe, and brought eventually to the Mission House, looking so pitiful in her starving and well nigh frozen condition that the Indian who saved her said, "She seemed to take hold of my heart." May is now a bonny two-year-old, bright and thriving, and as full of fun and mischief as a child can be.

Caroline le Noir, the other maiden, is a bright-eyed, merry-faced girl of ten, who has never been so far from her "own country" (as she calls Fort Simpson) before, and who looks rather grave at the thought of the two or three hundred miles before us. She is sister to Allan Hardisty, our native catechist, the

cause of difference in their surnames being that old Baptiste le Noir, an Indian hunter, on the occasion of his second marriage "threw away," as they term it, his two oldest boys, one of whom was received by Mr. Hardisty, the Hudson Bay Officer at Fort Simpson, and named after him ; the other came under my husband's care and was baptized by his name, William. Both have turned out good, steady youths. Allan has been working very well for some years as a catechist and schoolmaster among the Red Indians at Fort Norman, and William is now in the Company's service and sets an example to his fellows in more ways than one ; amongst others he is noted as the boy who never says a bad word, not even to his dogs !

The windings of the Mackenzie River from Fort Simpson northwards are somewhat monotonous until the Horny Mountains come in sight ; these are a small branch or spur of the great Rocky Mountains. Their rugged outlines and deep, dark hollows form such fine shadowy contrasts to the mass of snowy surface, lighted up as they were with the gleams of the setting sun.

On the morning of the second day after leaving Fort Simpson, we came to the "Little Rapid," a small post of the Hudson Bay Company, where the Indians congregate every spring to bring their furs for the Company, taking in payment blankets, ammunition, gay ribbons, beads, or cloth.

The Bishop went at once to the Indian camps, where he soon gathered a goodly number for prayers, after which he baptized some of the children, and then we assembled at "La Violette's" house for breakfast, for which we were quite ready, having

made but a very hasty meal that morning before five o'clock.

In the afternoon we left Little Rapids and started anew for Fort Norman. A number of wild ducks were flying past us and a few geese, some of which the boatmen shot, and gave us a share of their spoils.

As we approached Fort Norman, the ice became more and more formidable, and on Monday morning we sighted the Fort. Now, indeed, we had a good view of these Rocky Mountains I had so longed to look upon, and very grand they were, not so much from their great height, as from their bold, rugged peaks, on whose snowy surface the morning sun gleamed and shimmered with exquisite effects. A great barrier of ice was revealing itself between us and Fort Norman.

"I thought as much," remarked the Bishop; "the ice was later in breaking up at Fort Simpson than has been known for many years, and it is natural that it should be still more so further north. And now, what is to be done?"

What indeed? For it was evident that some days would be required to thaw those huge mountains of ice which formed our barrier. Should we draw near to the shore and wait? This was out of the question, for every few moments large blocks of ice were sliding down the banks, where they had been deposited but a day or two since, while the turmoil they made in the water and loud sounds as of thunder warned us from any approach to the fallen masses. At last, after some discussion, it was decided to put the boat back for a mile or two and try to find some small creek or bay where she might be safely moored, while two of the men were sent ashore and, after great difficulty,

succeeded in scrambling up the bank of ice, and so made their way to the Fort in order to ask the advice of the officer-in-charge as to what could be done.

We shall not soon forget that day and night in the boat. It is true we were comparatively out of danger, for we found a sheltered little creek into which the boat was run, and then fastened by a strong rope to the top of the bank. Mr. F., the officer at the Fort, summoned all the Indians to our rescue, and they were soon at work, some of them with axes endeavouring to cut a track for us through the great blocks of ice, and all volunteering to carry up our boxes, bedding, and articles of furniture, on condition of payment in tea—to which we were only too thankful to accede. Still, as we sat in the boat through that day, the huge blocks of ice came falling around us with a crash and a noise of thunder; in some parts large portions of the bank itself seemed to give way and roll down with the ice.

The night of much peril was passed through in safety, and early next morning my husband left us, as he was anxious to see as much as possible of the Indians at Fort Norman before proceeding on his journey. He effected the dangerous ascent pretty well, but the walk through the tangled, thorny, trackless wood, by which he had to reach the Fort and mission station, must have been even more difficult, to judge by his tattered and unpresentable appearance when he returned that evening.

I was much interested in watching the columns of smoke issuing from the banks for some miles round Fort Norman. It appears that this is a coal district and these banks have been emitting smoke for hundreds of years! Of course, the Indians account

for it by their favourite "Nahkami" (bad Indian), who, being the enemy of every tribe, has settled himself somewhere in the bowels of the earth where he sits smoking his pipe!

It is singular the combination of winter and summer which one meets with in this country. At the time I write, with ice all around us, and some nights still frosty, the heat by day is almost insufferable.

The little mission station at Fort Norman, although one of the smallest, is not the least promising of our northern missions. The Red Indians assemble here in large numbers in spring and autumn, bringing their furs for trading, and after some weeks return to the shores of the numerous lakes or to the mountains, where they must lead very hard lives, as there are not enough trees to serve them for fuel, and the mountain sides are so steep and slippery that no man, woman or child among them ventures to move without a staff in hand.

The Bishop always manages to use these opportunities of meeting them for mission work; they bring their children to be baptized, and the church is well filled on Sundays and at Evensong. They are all friendly and well-intentioned, and quite of average intelligence. Their great desire is to have a clergyman resident among them, and they offer willingly to support him—that is, to feed him entirely in return for his ministrations and teachings. We have, alas! only a catechist and schoolmaster here at present, but the Bishop visits the station as often as possible, and would most thankfully place a clergyman here, were men and means forthcoming. As it is, Allan (Hardisty), our native catechist, has done his best. He has had them all under religious instruction: the

children daily in school and the men at other times. He has, single-handed, built a small church and mission house, and in the former he gathers the Indians daily for Evensong. They evince a touching interest in their church and services. The church, built entirely of wood, with bark roofing, is a very nice little building. I have many ideas of improving it within and without. I have been making an altar cloth and cushions, and am now very busy and interested in manufacturing a font out of some white clay which we found. It is very malleable when steeped in water and becomes quite hard when baked, and I lie awake at night tracing designs which I work out by day. Hitherto the only font here has been a small silver basin which I have.

Allan walks down the church at times during the service to find their places (for the Indians) in the syllabic book, or at times he will make a pause at "Etthi Yenithum" (I believe), etc., which, after a great deal of page turning, they succeed in finding for themselves. Their singing is more hearty and vigorous than melodious; "Abide with me" and "Lead kindly Light" are great favourites among them, and have been well translated into Slavé, the former by the Bishop, the latter by Archdeacon Kirkby.

We have been very busy settling into our little halting-place and it begins to look homelike already; a few chairs and a table, some sacred prints and dear home pictures do very much to make it look civilized. Our home here has certainly no large dimensions—just a "But-and-a-ben," as the Scotch have it, and, as the same Northern Singers observe, "three sparrows might dance on the floor" of my largest apartment, yet, when I see the number of Indians

who can assemble in it, I begin to think my eyes must deceive me as to its diminutive size, or that it is capable of expansion at will.

I have been tracing a resemblance between the grand old Cuchullins in my water-colour sketch of Loch Scavaig, in Skye, and these Rocky Mountains which I see from my window. One fine old cluster of rocks forms the northern boundary of Fort Norman; the appearance is but of bare rock, but I hear that there are abundance of the sweet blueberries on the top. Allan suggests that we might make an expedition there in the summer and bring back a supply for winter preserves, taking our blankets with us and encamping out for the night. Truly, a Red Indian's idea of home and all its comforts is comprised in the one word "blanket."

FORT NORMAN,
MACKENZIE RIVER.
July, 1881.

I have been stationary here since June, while the Bishop has been visiting the northern tribes. He brings back a most satisfactory account of their progress and steadfastness in the Faith, which cheers us greatly. How much I wish that more could be done for these dear Indians. They value Church privileges greatly and yet it is possible to do but so little for them. Oh, for more men out here, good earnest soldiers of the great Army, who will not shrink from the hardships which must be endured, or faint if they do not see immediate results from their labours.

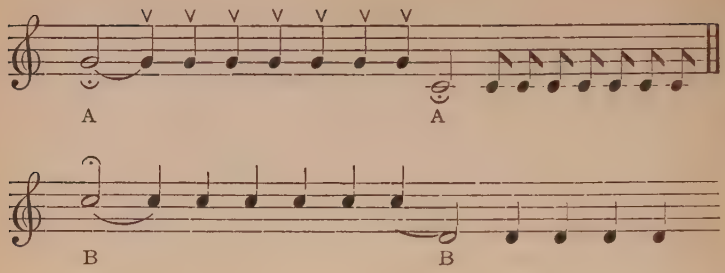
Our need of workers is ever on the increase—brave-hearted men who will really give themselves to the work. One of the greatest trials of the Bishop is to

be quite unable to respond to an appeal from some tribe of our people for a clergyman to dwell among them and minister spiritually to them. They undertake in such a case to secure his safety and provide for his maintenance. But our cry homewards for men to "come over and help" meets with very faint response.

Allan Hardisty visited these Indians last winter in their hunting grounds. He went by special invitation and spent a very happy time among them, teaching, and reading with them, and holding services daily as far as he was able to do, and they entertained him most hospitably. Those who come here are almost all friendly to the Mission. I show them pictures, in which they are greatly interested. They like the *Illustrated News,* giving out so many "Eh—Eh—E—he's" over the white man's doings.

We had a sad but very hopeful death a few weeks since. Albert, son of the old Chief Lambert and formerly hunter to the Mission, met with a serious accident while hunting some years ago, and soon afterwards bone disease set in, the whole leg and thigh becoming affected. He and his wife were baptized by the Bishop some years since and have remained faithful, he himself being one of our best churchmen among the Indians, and his patience and cheerfulness during this long trial were very touching.

When, after much suffering, the end came, the Indian wail, which is full of deep pathos and yet so hard to describe, awoke from young and old—men and women. It is conducted by the wives, who wax more and more vociferous, the men joining in at the very top of their voices as loud as they can possibly contrive to make it. These are the exact notes :



A number of the women keep it up on the same notes (from A to A) for a long time until one wife thinks increased vehemence is required, and so she strikes up in another key (B to B), and this continues for a while, until a further change of key is thought desirable.

The whole scene was one not to be soon forgotten: the manly form and, in truth, noble features of the dead man in the homely wigwam, with only green brushwood for his couch and boughs entwined for his shelter, while all around him were the kneeling and crouched forms of his relatives and friends uttering loudly their cries of woe and lamentation, with hair dishevelled and falling over the face, down which the tears streamed unchecked.

The body was moved to a sledge, drawn into the church, and reverently placed there. Allan then dispersed the people, bidding them reassemble in the church when he rang the bell, and this they did unanimously, stopping their howls, poor dears, for the time, and all joining earnestly in the service, even singing the hymns quite nicely and listening with great attention to a short address which Allan gave them. The body remained in the church throughout the night, and on the following day we laid it to rest.

SCHOOL OF EVANGELISM

[Mrs. Bompas's kindness of heart and thoughtfulness for others, and the indomitable and ever-youthful spirit which had enabled her, in the face of all difficulties, to provide a Christmas tea and tree during her first winter in the North-West, and later prompted her to organise a Sunday school treat under almost Arctic conditions, were shown again in the planning of a week-end expedition during the summer of 1881, at a time when the Bishop was absent upon a northern tour, and when, as later extracts in her Journal tell, she and her little band of Indians at Fort Norman were suffering much hardship from shortness of food.]

Extract from Mrs. Bompas's Journal. Fort Norman, August, 1881

Fort Norman,
North-West Canada.
August, 1881.

I have been taking charge of the school here daily for the last month, that Allan, the schoolmaster, might get on more rapidly with the Mission buildings. Last week the work seemed languishing, and I thought he needed some change and rest, so I proposed a visit to a camp a short distance off to see a hunter, and a group of Indians, thinking we might do some mission work among them, and spend a Sunday there.

My proposal was gladly accepted, and having only thought of the plan on Thursday evening we were *en route* on Friday morning in a fine large canoe, in which, however, there was no room to spare, as we were a party of nine, including the schoolmaster's wife and children, besides my three Indian girls, and

Donald, our Indian boy. We took our blankets and kettles, some tea and flour, and, for myself, little beyond a Bible and Prayer-Book, a volume of Mrs. B. B.'s Poems, and two *Guardians* of November and December, 1880. Whatever else I needed for my comfort I could but look at with a longing sigh, and the only addition was some medicines for the Indians. We had a lovely day for our start, and the paddle down the river was quite enjoyable. The scenery around Fort Norman is much finer than at Fort Simpson, and the mountains, which, as Mrs. B. B. says, "seem to live in Holy Families," are so grand and beautiful.

Donald sat foremost in the canoe and paddled, then came Lizzie, my Louchou child, and Carrie, my Slave girl. Then Mary, Allan's wife, and her two little ones, myself and "Baby Mary," and, lastly, Allan as steersman. It took about nine hours to get down the river, putting ashore for dinner and supper. We were delayed by a beaver, which rose just ahead of the canoe, and to whom we gave chase, but he would put his head under the water just as Donald fired, so we had to forgo a beaver-tail for supper.

When, at length, we reached the Indian camp, silence reigned supreme, and we found them all asleep—that is, all were wrapped in their blankets in the moose-skin lodges, with their feet towards the central fire, still most acceptable on August 12.

Would you imagine that they showed any excitement at this nocturnal visit of a Bishop's wife, who with her companions had travelled some forty or fifty miles to see and talk to them? No, indeed, they would not be true to their Indian nature if they did so. The Chief and a few of the men just unrolled them-

selves out of their blankets and sat up, holding out their hands for a friendly shake, so far denoting pleasure. After a time they bestirred themselves rather more and got up. Allan said prayers, and we sang one of the Mission hymns before settling ourselves for the night. I wrapped my blanket round myself and Baby Mary, and the two girls lay down next to me upon the turf, rolled up in theirs. I preferred being quite outside the camp for many reasons, but of sleep I had hardly any. Mosquitoes were swarming round me all night, so I had to get up and renew the fire, getting as much smoke as possible in our faces, which was preferable to the wretched tormentors.

We found next morning that the Indians were about to change their camping ground, and were all on the move, so as we had come for their benefit there was nothing for it but to move with them. They soon took down wigwams and lodges, collected all their belongings, such as dried moose meat, beaver claws, moose noses, etc., put a little extra touch of pitch to their canoes where needed, and then we were retracing our steps of the day before for about twenty miles. We encamped in a pleasant spot with lovely mountain views, and a small river near at hand for ablutionary purposes. The Chief was courteous enough to assign his tent to me, and this added greatly to my comfort. When they were settled, the Indians came to me and were very friendly. Some brought me pieces of moose meat, and I gave them tea and flour. Allan read the service on Sunday, both morning and evening, and all the Indians came to it. We sang two hymns in which they all joined very heartily. In the afternoon I had Sunday school for my girls, and one

Indian boy, and Allan took all the Indian children for teaching.

On Monday we started again for home; the Indians, meanwhile, had become very cordial and much wished me to remain until they had hunted and killed something for me, but I was too much occupied at home to allow of this. We returned to Fort Norman very leisurely, halting in a charming nook abounding with wild berries. I sat on the bank with my little May, while Mary and the girls made for the woods to pick a supply. I found a number of fossils and some wild flowers. Allan resumed his building with renewed vigour, and I took up the school again to set him quite free.

September, 1881.

We have been going through the painful experience during these summer months of great scarcity of provisions—not an unusual case in these remote northern regions, but where, unfortunately, at the same time, one has a greater capacity for food than elsewhere.

There has been an unusual prevalence of stormy weather of late, with much strong wind, and this entirely keeps off the fish, on which at this season of the year we depend wholly for subsistence. Allan has three large nets spread in different parts of the river and goes off in his canoe each morning and evening to visit them, but returns either quite empty-handed, or with only two or three small fish for the support of a household of six or seven people. The supply of dried meat which I brought with me from Fort Simpson diminished rapidly as soon as I began to distribute it amongst the many hungry ones. I have still a small quantity of oatmeal and flour left, but this is coming to an end, and unless the fish come in I

know not what we shall do, as we have nothing to fall back upon. Potatoes have not as yet reached Fort Norman, but we have planted some this year, and the crop looks promising.

I have undertaken the school myself daily, to set Allan free, and am glad to have been enabled to go on with it, though really often suffering from inanition. One's heart aches most for the children—their pale, pinched faces seem to haunt me. They are very patient and enduring, and work away at the berries, which at present are only half ripe, and dig up a root of which the Indians are very fond, and which I myself find not unpalatable. I have sent Allan off on an expedition to some of the neighbouring lakes, and with him my Indian boy Donald, as they may possibly shoot some wild ducks or a few white partridges, and, what would be better still, they might find some beavers, which are excellent food, and which ought to be abundant, seeing that from this small part of Fort Norman alone 2,500 beaver skins were sent off to Europe this summer. I have had the women and children up at the Mission House every evening, and we prayed earnestly for help in our urgent need. On some days our wants have been supplied in a remarkable manner; once, when we were almost at the last gasp, some Indians suddenly appeared, having just killed a moose deer, and they had never been at this Fort before. The weather all the time continued most gloomy and tended to the general depression, fierce thunderstorms prevailing, and dark, grey, lowering days with scarcely one gleam of sunshine, and the wind at night was fearful, howling around our small wooden dwelling, while my husband was far away. In my loneliness and isolation I talk a great deal to these

grand old mountains, and they say much to me. There is one particular group, which I see from my window, which is to me quite a family of friends. I think they never appear twice over alike—such a constant variety of light and shade.

September.

I have been asked to make a flag for this mission station. One is always hoisted when the Bishop comes, and Allan has set up a fine flagstaff with a small cross at the top. After some planning and concocting from memory the right lines, I have succeeded in turning out a very respectable Union Jack, barring, of course, the right material, although my crimson twill and dark blue cotton really look very well.

Winter is coming on with us, and when this reaches England your summer will be at hand. An English summer! I think of it sometimes with a kind of yearning to smell a sweet violet, or a cabbage rose, to look again upon geraniums, fuchsias, myrtles, and the rich wealth of colouring in an English flower garden; to see some lovely oaks and elms, some limes and beeches, to smell the lilacs enriched in their colour with the golden laburnum! I know not how I should bear the rapture of all this, any more than I could bear to hear a symphony of Mozart or Haydn, or a song of Beethoven or Schubert; these all seem to belong to another state of existence to which I can hardly fancy that I ever belonged!

We have had hardly any summer this year after our long winter, and yet the wild flowers have been abundant amongst the mountains.

I believe the mineral properties here to be very great, though they have hardly as yet been explored. There is certainly an extensive deposit of coal beneath

the banks of the river ; we pick up stones, small, but so very heavy that surely they must contain iron ; some gold is also to be found here with exquisite crystals, and innumerable fossils.

I had to part with my last tea yesterday for two beaver tails, and our soap is quite exhausted. Still, we are hoping for the boats ere long, and I am expecting the Bishop's return from Slave Lake, and who knows what stores he may bring !

Letter written to "The Net"

Fort Norman,
July, 1882.

The Bishop's return to us was greatly delayed. We counted on his arrival for relief in our most pressing necessities, and I was weary of acting on my own responsibility and judgment, for daily there is very much in which the said judgment is called for. But we looked and longed for him in vain, and the river became more firmly locked with ice. Towards the middle of November I was roused one night from sleep, and startled to the uttermost by the loud knocking at the door of two Indians, who shouted out to me :

"We bring you tidings of Bishop ; he is starving !"

It did not take me long to spring up and examine the men as to the truth of their report, and perilous indeed was the adventure which I gathered from them. The Bishop had reached Fort Simpson some days later than was expected. Finding that ice was rapidly forming on the river, so that to proceed northwards by canoe was utterly impossible, he started on a small raft (which was hastily and badly constructed) with one Indian. On this they were beating about for days

in great peril amid the gathering ice. They reached at last La Violette's house at Little Rapid, and there had to remain for ten days until the river was fast bound. Then the Bishop started anew to walk with four Indians, one of whom went after a bear in the woods and wholly lost sight of the others. Their supply of provisions was most insufficient, and from losing the right track the journey occupied twelve days instead of, as is usual, six. At length, when within a day's reach of this place, the Bishop was so overcome with exhaustion as to be quite unable to proceed, their only meal, sometime previous, having been a fish and small barley cake between four men. The Indians left him in the woods and hurried on to tell me of his condition . . . I felt there was no time to lose, and my first effort was to induce one of the young Indians to set off immediately to discover the Bishop in the woods, with Indian sagacity, and take him the relief I would send.

"'Whu-tale, Bishop is starving in the woods. I send him meat—chiddi, chiddi (quick, quick), eh?'

"Whu-tale, with true Indian passiveness, 'Maybe to-morrow.'

"'No, Whu-tale, to-morrow Bishop must be here; he cannot stand until he has eaten meat. I want you to take it now, and go to him like the wind. If you go directly and bring Bishop safe, I will give you a fine flannel shirt.'

"Whu-tale, a little more briskly: 'Then it would not be hard for me to go, and perhaps like the wind.'

"The next moment saw me emerging from my house, wrapped in my deer-skin robe, up the hill to the Fort, where I had to rouse the Hudson Bay Com-

pany's officer from a sound sleep to obtain from him a supply of moose meat. The thermometer was nearly 30° below zero, and wolves in a starving condition had been seen lurking near the Fort ; but I thought of neither the one nor the other, and only rejoiced to get Whu-tale off, and waited with enough anxiety through the succeeding hours. After darkness had set in on the following day, the travellers appeared, trudging along on snow-shoes, weary and footsore, my husband looking hardly able to stand, and with his beard all fringed with icicles. It is wonderful how he had been preserved amid such perils, and brought to me at last in answer to my prayers.''*

FORT NORMAN,
MACKENZIE RIVER.
St. Stephen's Day, December 26, 1881.

The cold has been pretty severe for some time even before Christmas, ranging from twenty to forty below zero, and the little house not very warm either, for it is but a roughly built affair. Then our supplies have been rather below the average this year—*i.e.*, no potatoes since September, and the needful provision of meat and fish, etc., rather uncertain ; yet for all this, by God's mercy we have never really wanted a meal, and just now we are having a sledge-load of beautiful fish come in, which we enjoy greatly for breakfast and dinner, and we have musk ox or moose meat for supper, with a dish of dumplings of flour and fish roe, which are delicious ! Now, do not think because I tell you the state of things that you must wring your hands over them, and pity and make yourself unhappy about me, for indeed you need not do

* "An Apostle of the North," pp. 209-214.

so—all these things are trifles when one gets used to them, and when one's need is real I find God's merciful hand always supplies it in some way or other.

William has fretted himself almost ill for having brought me here this winter, and he has worked so hard to make the house warmer and has improved it all greatly, mending the outside of the house and padding the inside with moss and paper, making shutters and window curtains himself, breaking old cases to turn into shutters, fixing deer-skins round my bed and old sails overhead to keep out draughts, and after all, and in spite of all, I am very thankful to be here.

Extracts from Mrs. Bompas's Journal and Letters, Fort Norman, January—February, 1882.

Epiphany, January 6, 1882.

A long interval in my Journal, but Christmastide and the New Year brought their usual press of occupations, and, in addition to these, the short days and scanty daylight made it very difficult to write. For some weeks we have had barely three hours of daylight—the sun makes his tardy appearance about 10.45 a.m. and sets soon after one o'clock, the remainder of the day until four o'clock being twilight, and after that, total darkness. No, not that though, for we have the moon in her northern beauty to shine for sixteen hours—her brilliancy at times is past description—and then the aurora, which is at its best between eleven and twelve at night, and which has, on some nights lately, been most glorious, heaving and waving, flickering and shimmering across the sky with ever-

changing shades and tints. One night it assumed the most perfect sea-green, another, it was crimson, fading down at the edges, and sometimes it is like a fringe swaying with the wind. Oh, if Mendelssohn had but seen an aurora! None could describe it in music as he would do, and I know no other means of portraying it!

February 13, 1882.

I wrote this much of my letter last December, but Allan never turned up. I suppose there was some difficulty about "prey," as, you see, in a winter trip dogs have to be fed as well as men, and so there was no means of sending our letters. It was a great blank and disappointment, neither sending nor receiving letters, and has made the winter double its usual length. Poor Miss Morris* is rather low at getting no letters since she left in May last! She is such a nice girl and I am so thankful to have her; I wish you had seen her; she makes me in love with Wales and the Welsh. She has not very much to do here, as William only lets her take school three times a week, and she has a knitting class twice a week; but she reads to me nicely and writes letters for me, and as we have three Indian girls now, who must never be out of sight, it is a comfort to be able to hand them over to her sometimes, and in the evening she and I play and sing together, only my harmonium is almost on its last legs! I admire her Welsh songs so much and the Welsh hymns are exquisite. Her father has written a number of hymns and published them. . . . I think I told you that Miss M. had several "offers" on her journey out, the officers of the H.B. Company dis-

* A companion to Mrs. Bompas.

tinguishing themselves as usual with their urgent eagerness to obtain a wife. One of these individuals took the unprecedented device of offering a lady of the party 300 dollars if she would persuade Miss Morris to marry him. I do not think she was struck with any of the gentlemen.

It has been rather a trying winter in some respects ; the wee house is rather a cram for six of us to live in. The inner room, which is all open roof, is Miss M.'s bedroom. I have hung some nice curtains round her bed ; there are some neat bookshelves with all my choice books. There are two windows here, one at the end looking up the hill towards the master's house, and the other towards the river and the dear, dear mountains.

We have been mercifully helped on with respect to food, but times have been pretty hard, and Mr. Irvine, the H.B. Company officer-in-charge, and dear William himself, have been somewhat anxious. Last week they announced that we must be put on half rations—*i.e.*, 30 lbs. dried meat per week for our party of seven, instead of 60 lbs., and this without a single vegetable to help out. Well, it seemed a rather bad lookout, but wonderful, is it not, yet simply true—the 30 lbs. has held out and supplied us all, as well, even better than the 60 lbs. We have never come short of a meal, and one day this week we did get a small piece of fresh meat from an Indian, and another day three sledges appeared with a little more, so we are all cheering up, though the "half-rations" still continue. All this I tell you, my dearest, to incite you to pray on for us, not to make you anxious.

About my plans, my darling, you must not be disappointed at my run home being deferred for another

year. I could not make up my mind to take such a journey again without my husband ; besides, I do want William to get away a little out of the diocese and to see something of the outer world, and he finds it impossible to do this this year, but thinks it possible he might in the year 1883, and so, if life be spared and courage fail not, I think many more improbable things may occur than that I should find myself once more in dear old England and who knows, perhaps . . .

[1882.

[In the autumn of this year, 1882, the Bishop took Mrs. Bompas from Fort Norman to Fort Resolution on Great Slave Lake, "where," wrote the Bishop, "I have left her, I hope, a little more comfortable than last winter."*

[1883.

In March of the following year, 1883, after travelling about for many months, visiting various missions, the Bishop heard that Mrs. Bompas was ill, so he proceeded as soon as possible to Fort Resolution, where he found her in better health than he had expected, although she had suffered severe hardships in the winter because of the cold.

Although he had been away nine months, he only remained at Fort Resolution two weeks, and then pushed north to the Tukudh mission, visiting various stations on the way. Here he remained one year, but before leaving he made arrangements for Mrs. Bompas to revisit England.]

* "An Apostle of the North," p. 217.

CHAPTER VI

1884—1892

BISHOP BOMPAS was a man of giant strength, but the many long and terrible journeys through the length and breadth of the North-West, which devotion to duty and an heroic, indomitable will had prompted and enabled him to achieve during eighteen years, had told upon him.

"'I feel,' he wrote, 'much gratitude to Almighty God for the needful health and strength granted me for the past year's travel, but I do not feel so much energy for journeying as before, and may be unable to accomplish the same again.'

"He maintained that the great extent of the country, 3,000 miles long, rendered his own superintendence of the missions rather superficial; but, he continued, 'if the zeal and affection of friends at home would provide an additional Bishop for Peace River, then I think the whole diocese, as large as half Europe, might be viewed as an end worth an effort to accomplish.'

"The long desired change at last took place (in 1884). A definite step was taken by the Provincial Synod of the province of Rupert's Land, and a new diocese was carved out of the southern part of the old. This included the Peace River district, and retained the name of Athabasca.

"Here, then, were two dioceses—one the Mackenzie River, stretching from the 60th parallel of north latitude to the Arctic Circle, and westward beyond

the great mountains, bleak and desolate; the other nearer civilisation, and only half as large, but with great prospects before it. Which would the veteran take? The one that promised greater ease? No, that was never his plan. Leaving Athabasca in charge of Bishop Young, who had been consecrated on October 18, 1884, for that special field, he set his face steadfastly towards the frozen North, as far as possible from the restraints of civilization.''*

In the year 1885 there broke out the great rising of the half-breed element along the banks of the Saskatchewan River, which is known as the ''North-West Rebellion.''

''It was brought about through several causes, such as the advance of civilization, the threatened famine due to the rapid disappearance of the buffalo, the 'fear that their lands, of which they had received no patents or title-deeds, would be snatched away by speculators,' and the dissatisfaction 'with the Government's method of surveying the land, which interfered with the old French plan of having all the farms fronting upon the river.'

''Led by Louis Riel, himself a half-breed (the leader of the Red River Rebellion in 1869), and joined by the Cree Indians of Saskatchewan, they spread terror over the country, committing at the same time a number of unwarrantable murders. The North-West Mounted Police, of whom there were only 500 at hand, bravely held them in check until General Middleton, Commander-in-Chief of the Canadian Militia, arrived from Eastern Canada with a force of 4,400 men. After several sharp encounters at Fish Creek, Batoche, and Cut Knife Creek, the rebels

* ''An Apostle of the North,'' pp. 220, 226-229.

were defeated and the rebellion brought to a close. . . .

"Though the disaffection did not extend to the Indians of the Mackenzie River Diocese, yet the mission stations suffered severely, as some of the Hudson Bay Company's posts were in the disturbed districts, and at these places mission supplies had been stored, ready to be forwarded during the summer. . . .

"Not only did the rebellion cut off the Mission supplies, but it was a sore hindrance to Mrs. Bompas, who was returning from England with recruits for the work in the Far North. Several times they essayed to go forward, but in vain, and for a whole year (until April 30, 1886) were forced to remain in Winnipeg."*

Extracts from Mrs. Bompas's Journal: Her Journey from Winnipeg to Fort Simpson, April—August, 1886.

Fort Simpson,
Mackenzie River.
November, 1886.

The Mission party which left Winnipeg on April 30 last only landed at Fort Simpson on August 2. We were indeed thankful to find ourselves thus far in health and safety; some of us to be stationary, at all events through the winter months, while others, after a few weeks' breathing time, will be starting off again for their respective stations on Peel River and the Yukon.

The first part of our journey—*i.e.*, from Winnipeg

* "An Apostle of the North," pp. 233-234, 237.

to Calgary—was most enjoyable. We travelled by Canadian Pacific Railway through lovely prairie country—the fresh air and sense of repose were indescribably soothing and refreshing after our last busy days in Winnipeg. We stopped three times each day for our meals, and the strange-sounding names of Moosomin, Moose Jaw and Swift Current, Medicine Hat, etc. represented neat little towns, or settlements, where we were as comfortably entertained as the most fastidious travellers could desire. Having left Winnipeg on Friday morning, we reached Calgary on Sunday, May 2. The first sound which saluted us was the bell of the little English church ringing for morning prayer.

At Calgary we went through one of our many times of waiting and suspense. The heavy luggage, which we had sent on from Winnipeg fully a week previous to our own departure, had not arrived. No one knew the cause of the detention and no one could predict with any certainty when we might hope to see it; in vain we wrote and telegraphed and tormented all the railway officials with ceaseless inquiries.

To start without our luggage, with the prospect of its lying in the H.B.C.'s store at Calgary for the next year or two, or getting mixed up with the goods of Athabasca missionaries (a large party of whom were expected in shortly), was not to be thought of. The ladies of our party shrank from the idea of moose-skin dresses for the coming winter, and they and the gentlemen thought of many small articles which should help to make their homes warm and comfortable, and, still more, of the books which should shorten the long wintry hours of the Far North. All things considered, it was resolved to wait, and, in

the meantime, we explored the beauties of Calgary, and a most charming little town it is, having sprung up within the last four years, but boasting now of three churches, a handsome post office, and other public buildings. The view of the Rocky Mountains from Calgary is indescribably grand and beautiful. We gazed at them in all directions, and they presented, as mountains will present, ever new effects, according to the time of day, sunrise or sunset, or our own position while gazing on them. They were, of course, at this early season, snow-capped and nearly snow-covered, yet here and there one could discern small patches of green brought to light by the warm embrace of our May sunshine.

The whole history of the making of the C.P.R. is full of interest ; it is certainly one of the great achievements of our age, and men may well be proud who have had any hand in its construction. The men appear to have worked in gangs about 800 in number, with (in Yankee parlance) one Boss and one or two foremen over them. At one time they worked day and night, the night brigade coming on when the other retired, and working on by electric lights, four of which were kept alight for their benefit. The big Loop is one of the remarkable pieces of engineering skill which characterises the C.P.R.'s progress through the Rockies. The Loop is in the Selkirk branch of the mountains. Here the road describes the figure of the letter S doubled. At the western end of the Loop you are 800 feet above the level of the sea, and at the eastern end you are 2,000 feet above it (the distance being only 45 miles). The mountains here rendered a direct course impossible, and the height to be attained still more so. At the upper end

of this loop you catch sight of the Big Glacier, which is one of the wonders of these mountains. The west side of the crossing and farther on there are 43 miles of trestles 30 feet high, and 47 miles farther on the last spike was driven which completed the road.

About this part, too, there are some lovely lakes—some of them of tremendous depth ; it is said of one of these that a line of 2,000 fathoms could not touch the bottom ! and a rock which had been blasted, and which was computed to measure some 2,300 cubic feet, fell into the lake without leaving the slightest trace of its presence or raising the water by half a foot !

We were now in the region of the Blackfeet Indians, and a number of these dark-skinned, but tall, well-built and good-featured men were continually hanging about the streets and stores of Calgary, observing and taking mental notes of all the wondrous changes wrought by the white invaders of their country. One cannot help feeling strong sympathy and respect for this brave, though hard-headed race, and especially for Crowfoot, their intrepid Chief. Whatever part they may have taken in the late rebellion it was, as Crowfoot solemnly declared, forced upon them by others—*i.e.*, by unscrupulous men who made money by war on the Indians.

These Blackfeet, like all the races of Indians, have indomitable pride, and cling with undying faith to their old traditions, and this should be taken into account before they be treated like children or branded as traitors. If the white men did but appreciate or understand the sagacity and sharpness of intellect which many of the despised red men exhibit, they would, perhaps, learn a little more prudence and

tact in dealing with them. As it is, the Sioux and Blackfeet have, perhaps, been more troublesome and unmanageable than any to the missionary. They have a curious admixture of truth and error in their Creed, which it is hard, very hard, to set right. They believe in a Supreme Being, in the immortality of the soul, in happy hunting grounds prepared and made ready for all good Indians. They hold to miserable sand-hills somewhere in this lower world where the bad Indian must be content to hunt diminutive buffalo ; and yet they still keep up the solemnity of their sun dance, where the great deeds of their deceased warriors are related, and the candidates for fame submit themselves willingly, even gladly, to excruciating tortures. Wooden skewers are run through the flesh of back or breast, and the victim is suspended in the air and expected to remain there until the flesh gives way under the weight of his body.

The Blackfeet have a superstitious veneration for the number seven ; it is to them a mystical number and seems to have had a singular association with all their past history. There were seven tribes. The whole nation is and was divided into seven classes or ranks. Seven women were always appointed to guard the Buffalo pounds. At their feasts seven stones are used for the bath. The origin of this veneration for the number seven is probably the following poetical tradition :

"Seven youths were once watching the field in which the sacred plant tobacco was sown, and they were so good and faithful that the Great Spirit was pleased, and He came down and invited them up to Heaven ; they danced their way there, and to this day they may be seen as the Pleiades."

EVANGELICAL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

There is a curious custom observed among the Blackfeet which I noticed last winter among the Sioux —*i.e.*, the husband must never see the face of his mother-in-law! The most ingenious and amusing devices are hit upon to prevent this undesirable encounter ever taking place.

The Sioux have another superstition which I doubt not is shared by the Blackfeet, as their beliefs and customs are so much alike. This is a small imp called "Heyoka," which one would liken to a Spirit of Contrariety, as it prompts men in all cases to run counter to common sense and prudence or discretion. In winter those possessed by Heyoka will divest themselves of all covering; in summer they will dress in furs and blankets. They call black white; they ride facing the horse's tail; they always aim away from the object they wish to shoot at.

May 8, 1886.

Our lost goods have come at last and we are thankful. We start at once for Edmonton—a drive of some 300 miles. Our array of equipages presented a rather imposing appearance wending its way through the streets of Calgary. First comes a four-wheeled vehicle called a "Democrat" with two horses; then a two-wheeled buggy with one horse; after these, at a demure snail's pace, came the nine waggons or carts bearing our goods, tents, provisions for the way, etc. The horses attached to these carts are poor, miserable-looking creatures. They proved themselves equal to their task, however, working on day after day through drenching rain, or blinding snow, or scorching sun, with no other food given them but the short prairie grass which they chewed at will through the night.

Later on, however, when the mosquitoes began to swarm in good earnest, the sufferings of these poor patient brutes were much increased, and they are known sometimes to forgo their food and stand for hours round the fire kindled for their benefit, in the smoke of which is their only comfort and safety.

The scenery at this part of our journey was dull and monotonous, only a vast expanse of prairie land, low and level, with hardly a tree or bush to vary its monotony. From the swamps and lakes which we passed rose countless ducks and other water fowl, and our freightor made good use of his gun, and occasionally presented us with some of his lovely spoils. The first Sunday on the prairie we are not likely to forget, a cold, incessant, drenching rain set in and continued all day. Our tents were soaking and the rain beat in under the eaves. Moreover, as we now discovered, we had no firewood ! This important item had been completely overlooked or forgotten in our hurried start from Calgary. So we sat shivering and disconsolate in our respective tents, only meeting occasionally, or at meal times, "Patrice," our half-breed freightor, kindly boiling our tea-kettle for us, as he had brought a small quantity of wood for his own use.

On the Wednesday following this rainy Sunday, we had a similar visitation of snow, which began at night and continued steadily nearly the whole day. Our tents were hard as boards, and as far as eye could reach there was nothing but unbroken, untrodden snow. The prospect was wild and dreary enough, and we sighed often enough for a good English coal fire. Our circumstances were here somewhat better, however, than on the previous Sunday, as we were within a short walk of a small house (one of the calling houses of the mail-

car from Calgary), and Mr. Scarlet kindly permitted us to turn in there from time to time and thaw ourselves by his store fire. The snow discontinued that evening and, although several inches deep, had quite disappeared before the end of the week.

We now fell into a regular routine which continued with few deviations until we reached Athabasca Landing. We rose at half-past five or six o'clock and got our boy up and breakfast cooked by seven. Tents down, provision cart reloaded, and waggons off by eight. Then, when our camping ground was cleared and quiet, our Mission party assembled for prayers, Mr. G. (chaplain at Fort Rae) conducting the service. We sang our morning hymns, and very sweet did it sound in that still, unbroken silence of the prairie. And then came the word "all aboard!" and we sprang into our conveyances and prepared ourselves as best we could for another day's shaking and jolting, for the roads across these prairies are no roads at all, but simply tracks grooved by some years' traffic. Sometimes a poor horse, with all his goodwill and much endurance of whip and abuse, would stick fast in the deep mire, unable to move backwards or forwards, and the joint efforts of three or four men would be needed to effect a move.

May 19, 1886.

The songbirds are beginning to make themselves heard as we approach the woods, some geese also have been seen, a few plovers, a number of prairie chickens, and one crane. The weather is getting milder and is now for the most part very enjoyable. We hope to have seen the last of the buffalo heads which lie in numbers on the prairies, sad relics of the days when those

prairie monarchs were ruthlessly destroyed for mere sport, and then left to rot in the hot sunshine. The buffaloes are now nearly exterminated. I secured one of these buffalo heads and carried it as a trophy under our "democrat"—it looked quite imposing in that position.

Mr. and Mrs. G. met with an adventure one day which might have ended unpleasantly. They had a little diverged from the rest of the party and lost their way; finding themselves near a wood where there were recent wheel tracks—they drove through it. After they had gone a few miles they noticed on one side of the track a grey-looking animal standing and looking towards them; a few minutes after, another of the same kind came in sight. They turned out to be wolves. Mr. G. did not waste time on this discovery, but put spurs to his horse and drove safely by, not a little thankful to be unmolested.

One night in my tent I felt something nestling at my side; on putting out my hand I clasped something warm and furry, which immediately loosed itself and got away. It was probably a marten or ermine.

May 22, 1886.

Nearing Edmonton! Heat most intense, our faces all peeling from scorching sun, and this in spite of hats and umbrellas. We have come in sight of the Saskatchewan river, flowing calm and broad and beautiful under the high rocks of Edmonton. This is the centre of an extensive district of peculiar fertility. The settlers tell you of unexpected success in their reaping of crops, even "off the sod"—*i.e.*, the first season that the soil is ploughed. Coal, too, is so abundant round Edmonton that a man may get his

winter's supply for the trouble of digging it. There are three churches at Edmonton, an hotel, schools, post office and telegraph station, and it is also an important depôt of the Hudson's Bay Company.

1886-1887.

[The winter 1886-1887 was a terrible one. The famine increased. Game was scarce, few moose were to be obtained, the rabbits all died, and the fish nearly all left the river. The Indians asserted that the scarcity of the finny "prey" was caused by the propeller of the new steamer *Wrigley,* which first churned the head waters of the great river the preceding fall, but was unable to reach the northern posts owing to the ice—hence the lack of supplies. But any excuse would serve the Indians, as on a previous occasion when fish was scarce (so Mrs. Bompas tells us) the natives said it was due to the white women bathing in the river. Such a radical change as cleanliness was evidently as much disliked by the fish as by the Indians.

"We have been living for some days," says Mrs. Bompas, "on flour and barley soup, and potatoes twice a day. We are four in family, and William gives us all the giant's share and takes so little himself. One hears terrible accounts of the Indians all around, all starving, no rabbits or anything for them to fall back upon. Here many of them hunt for rotten potatoes thrown away last fall. Oh! it is heartrending!"

At length so serious became the trouble that the Bishop, to lessen the number at the Fort, left for Fort Wrigley. Thus the winter and spring passed,

and not until the steamer arrived with supplies did the famine cease. On this steamer Mrs. Bompas left for England, and never again did she visit the Mackenzie River Diocese. The Indians and all missed her very much, and kept asking continually when she would return. "I tell the Indians and everyone else," wrote the Bishop to Mrs. Bompas, "that I have sent you home against your will."*

During the several years which Mrs. Bompas now spent in England she was able to send a few special things to her husband which she knew he needed and would appreciate. That he did so is shown in this extract from a letter she received from him: "I shall bless the day you were born, for two things you have done for me. You sent me my first pair of spectacles when I was getting blind, and so imparted new strength to my bodily eyes; and you sent me the Syriac Testament and Lexicon, and so have let the light of Heaven into my darkening mind. I find the Syriac text leads me nearer to God than all the commentaries I have ever read."†

Thereafter he spent more and more time in studying and translating the Bible from the Syriac.

"Meanwhile changes were taking place beyond the mountains, along the great Yukon River, the Quikpak of the Russians. Gold had been discovered, and the reports of the Government surveyors were attracting miners to that region, and it became necessary that more complete episcopal supervision should be made. The Bishop, writing concerning the matter, said:

"'The missionaries now labouring in the district re-

* "An Apostle of the North," pp. 241-243.

† *Ibid.*, p. 341.

ferred to are very isolated, and much need the support of episcopal oversight, which it is hoped may be no longer denied them. From the Mackenzie River it appears impossible to superintend the district. A visit thither from the east side of the Rocky Mountains would involve a journey of 5,000 miles or more, and an absence of two years. The Rocky Mountains form a natural barrier between the Mackenzie River and the large country farther west.'

"The result was that in 1890 the Provincial Synod of the province of Rupert's Land sanctioned the division of the Diocese of Mackenzie River. Archdeacon W. D. Reeve became Bishop of the eastern portion, stretching to the Arctic Ocean on the north and the Hudson Bay on the east, while Bishop Bompas gave himself up to the work along the Yukon River. . . .

"Even after the division was made, Bishop Bompas had no small sphere of work before him. His new diocese comprised 200,000 square miles, more than twice the area of Great Britain, and the third largest diocese in British America. . . ."*

"In August, 1891, we find him still at Fort Norman, and in a letter to Mrs. Bompas, who was in England, he wrote:

"'I am now engaged in packing up, with the view, if God will, of shortly and finally leaving Mackenzie River for the far West.'

"Before his consecration he had paid two visits to Fort Yukon, and travelled up the river to where another stream, the Forty Mile, joins the Yukon. To this spot the Bishop turned his attention in 1891 as a suitable site for his abode. Crossing the Rocky

* "An Apostle of the North," pp. 253-254, 258.

Mountains, he spent the winter of 1891 and 1892 at the lonely Rampart House.

"In the spring he went down the Porcupine River to the Yukon. It was here he met Mrs. Bompas, who was returning from England."*]

* "An Apostle of the North," p. 260.

CHAPTER VII

A JOURNEY TO THE YUKON (1892)

MRS. BOMPAS'S JOURNEY FROM YALE TO FORTY MILE CREEK, 1892

MRS. BOMPAS left Yale on May 7, 1892, and, after breaking her train journey at New Westminster, and at Victoria to visit Bishop Hills, arrived at San Francisco, where she remained for three weeks.

In her Journal, written at the Occidental Hotel, she said :

"Here I fell in with Mr. and Mrs. Wallis. He is one of our clergy from the Selkirk diocese and is in charge of the church near Rampart House. He has been home to England to be married, and brings out his bride.

"It is the time of the 'Convention'—or, as we should call it, the 'Synod'—of North and South California, and there has been a large gathering of all the clergy and the two bishops. Bishop Nichols, of North California, held an 'At Home' on Wednesday evening. I was introduced to him and Mrs. Nichols, and they received me most kindly and asked me to stand with them, and I was introduced to everybody and shook hands until I seemed to have no hand left to shake."

On another day she attended a beautiful service, a meeting and a luncheon organized by the Women's Auxiliary, and wrote: "It was altogether a charming day, and my respect and admiration for the American women are greatly increased."

She left San Francisco on board the s.s. *St. Paul* on June 5.

Extracts from Mrs. Bompas's Journal or from her Letters, June—November, 1892

S.S. "St. Paul."
June 9.

Out of sight of land. "Water, water everywhere." This is the fifth day of our long voyage, and the Captain says the weather has been unusually fine and the sea exceptionally smooth.

My fellow passengers include Mr. and Mrs. Wallis, a Moravian missionary, an Italian Roman Catholic priest, and three Sisters who are going to open a mission in the Far North, also a Greek Patriarch and his two associates.

The *St. Paul* is a well-built, steady vessel, but small compared with the Atlantic steamers. My cabin is a nice airy one on deck, with windows which open—to my great comfort. We have an immense amount of freight on board, the hold being completely full and half the deck covered, so that our space for walking is very limited. Most of the cargo on the deck consists of cases of potatoes for the northern whalers, who would starve but for these. Some of the boxes on deck are marked "Arctic Ocean," which makes one feel rather far away. The Captain said yesterday that

we are now a thousand miles from land every way, and the Pacific here is three miles deep.

UNALASKA.
June 16.

This is such a pretty tranquil spot—so very northern. The entrance to the Bay was grand, great jutting rocks and mountains, reminding me of scenery round Mull. One sees here clearly the demarcation of the Pacific Ocean and Behring Sea. The people are all of the Greek Church, and the Unalaskas are mostly half-breeds, Indian and Russian. I think there are now nine hours' difference of time between us !

UNALASKA,
ALEUTIAN ISLANDS.
June 22.

I have had a very pleasant, restful time here, and it is all so wondrous strange and interesting ! One morning lately there was a tremendous explosion from one of the mountains near. All these hills are volcanic, but most of them are extinct. The wild flowers are exquisite ; violets as large as heartsease ! And lovely white star-shaped blossoms of which I cannot find the name. I send you a small bag of native work, made of part of the inside of a seal. We dined off the seal one day, and were very doubtful whether we liked it. It has much the taste of the fur.

S.S. "ST. PAUL,"
ST. MICHAEL,
BEHRING SEA.
July 4, 1892.

St. Michael is a quiet little island, consisting of the offices and buildings of the Alaskan Company and a few Indian tents and huts spread about here and

there. The Indians here are a curious mixed race—Russian, Indian, and Esquimaux. Their language is peculiar, and their dress like the typical Esquimaux—skins and furs and elaborate leggings and moccasins in one.

We are anchored half a mile from the shore, as the coast is very shallow, and the Indians come out to us every day in their wonderful little skin boats with one hole in the centre for the man to sit in and paddle. They are such frail little canoes and dance upon the waves, but they appear perfectly safe, and the Indian sits bolt upright, his head covered with a fur hood, and he keeps on paddling away with a broad grin at the great vessel he is nearing.

We are now in Norton Sound—forty miles north of us is Behring Strait, which is only thirty miles from Asia, and north of that begins the Arctic Ocean.

In my letter from Unalaska I told you of our voyage there, where we remained for eight days and a half. I enjoyed the latter part of the voyage even more than the former. There was hardly any sea sickness among the passengers, so I had less nursing to do, and then came the interesting approach to the Pribiloff Islands. The first sight is here of the pretty seals sporting about in the water, popping straight up to look at us with such pretty, intelligent eyes! We saw several whales, too, and some creatures called "killers," a kind of fish of enormous size with a huge fin in its back! It is most destructive, both to whales and seals. One of them was caught and opened and found to have devoured eighteen seals! There is a smaller kind of whale found here which is perfectly white. The birds, too, are very beautiful. Plenty of eider-ducks, swans of great size, sea-parrots, etc.

When we reached the Pribiloff Islands, I found, to my great satisfaction, that the Captain was going to put in for an hour or two to enable the Greek Bishop to go on shore and hold a service for the people there. I asked permission to accompany him, and he was very gracious and willingly assented. We landed on St. Paul's Island, the largest of the group. As we drew near there were seals in every direction all round us, some climbing the rocks, some in the water, and we heard their strange, plaintive bark, something between a dog's bay and a cow's "moo." As soon as we landed we hurried up to the church and the bells were ringing prettily. The Bishop soon appeared vested in magnificent robes. The church was soon quite full and a short service followed, in which all seemed to join most heartily. There the children were all taken up to be blessed. The singing and the chanting was really beautiful. (It was the Liturgy of St. Basil.) I have attended several of these services and much enjoyed them.

After this I was invited into the house of the Greek priest and had a nice cup of tea made, of course, in a "samovar." Then I left him to talk to the Bishop, and wandered out by myself up the hill, where was a lovely view of the sea and islands and our steamer at anchor. The hill was strewn with seal skulls, and I was told that the next morning 500 of them were to be killed. I picked up a skull and brought it away, and I gathered some flowers and beautiful moss. The whole of the population of St. Paul's Island came down to the beach to see the Bishop and his two boy attendants off, and to receive his blessing. We all shook hands very affectionately, and I wanted to speak to the people, but could only remember a few

Russian words which I resolved to hazard, and my Russ seemed to take, for the people one and all came up to me with extended hands and broad smiles, and we exchanged "Preschetchi," etc., most lovingly.

Then I got into the boat and the Bishop stood up and gave the people his blessing, and all the people stood or knelt with bowed heads most reverently. The people kept following us as long as we were visible, and waving to us from the top of the banks and hills.

We hope to leave this in the small river steamer on the 8th. I fear we shall have rather a crush, as the *Arctic* has not much accommodation.

I did hope to meet my husband at Fort Yukon, and a letter from him met me here. He seemed rather in low spirits, and has had none of his letters. I am most impatient to reach him.

July 26.

Only think of my having been seven weeks on board! A month on board the *St. Paul* and now three the *Arctic*. There is a nice covered deck on the *Arctic*, and we sit there a good part of the day with our deck chairs.

The scenery on the Yukon was rather disappointing for the first hundred miles. The water was very low, and owing to this we met with our first accident, namely, the pilot got us on the sand-bank, on which we stuck, in spite of all efforts and nearly emptying the boat of its cargo. We were on it for four days, and it was anxious work, for the *Arctic* is not a strong boat and carried 200 tons of freight. Relief came at last in an unexpected manner.

At about three o'clock a.m., on the morning of the

fifth day, a shout of joy and triumph from the Indians roused me from sleep, and told me that we were once more afloat ! A high tide had come in and dislodged the steamer from the sand-bar. Then all was hurry-skurry and a great rush to get all the cargo on board again, and by 8 o'clock we were off, and going on as if nothing had happened. After this event all went smoothly with us, the scenery becoming more and more grand and beautiful, the mountains rising on either side of the river, sometimes in the far distance and then again quite near, sometimes only rocks with but little vegetation, but of such fantastic jagged outlines, then covered with verdure down to the shore, like mountains at Yale.

Now to tell you of the meeting with my dear husband, which was almost too thrilling to put into words. The Captain thought that he would probably come off in a boat to meet the steamer, which idea kept me on the *qui vive*. One night (the nights here are quite light, of course), as I was lying in my berth, I heard voices on the river bank and seemed to recognize my husband's among them. I jumped up from my berth and looked out, and there he was, standing with a group of Indians, conspicuous amongst them by his tall figure and long white beard. We were between laughing and crying when he saw me. The steamer stopped and he was soon on board and I on deck, which, happily, we had to ourselves. He looks older, and his hair very grey, but I suspect has altered less during the five years since we parted than I have, and he says he is fairly well.

We had, after this, pleasant stopping places each day to take in wood for our engine, or at some Indian camp to lay in a store of fresh meat or fish ; such

immense salmon and white fish, fresh and smoked, which are delicious. . . .

We came near to Fort Yukon, which is close to Porcupine River, where Mr. and Mrs. Wallis, with their hundred pieces of goods (!), left us to ascend the Porcupine River to Rampart House, where Mr. Wallis is to be stationed for the present and where a church is already built. Fort Yukon is 1,200 miles from St. Michael.

At length—on August 4, 1892—we reached Forty Mile Creek, close to which is the small Mission station, which is for the present to be our home. It is the most central part of the diocese, and therefore the Bishop prefers it to Selkirk.

CHAPTER VIII

FORTY MILE CREEK
(1892—1896)

Extracts from Mrs. Bompas's Letters or Journal, 1892

You know that the exact position of my husband's diocese is between the Rocky Mountains and the United States Territory of Alaska, extending from the Arctic Ocean on the north to the boundary of British Columbia on the south. The diocese contains 200,000 square miles; the population is now only about 5,000, including some hundreds of miners.

The neighbouring country is reported to be very rich in gold. The diggings hitherto worked appear to be chiefly on the American side of the border, but access to them is through the English territory, and smelting is done on the British side. The river steamers on the Yukon bring supplies for the miners in the summer, and there is every prospect of the country opening ere long to civilization.

The mission centres now established consist of one at Rampart House on the Porcupine River, St. John's Mission, Buxton, and at Selkirk, both these latter on the Upper Yukon. Intermediate mission stations are greatly needed, and work amongst the miners is most important.

At present the only certain communication with the

outer world is by steamers from San Francisco in May or June, or occasionally in August.

The great drawback to this position is that we are not far from the gold reefs to which the miners come in crowds from all parts of the world, and they intend making our station their headquarters during the winter months, when they cannot work the mines. We have every reason to fear that their goings on will be very sad and distressing, and to the ruin of our poor Indians. I want to try and open a sort of club-room for the miners with magazines and papers and occasional music, and to get a few of the men to join the "White Cross Army."

The Mission House is prettily situated above the river brink on the right bank, the mountains all around, range behind range. Our house is about fifty feet above the fine old Yukon, and we are really on an island—the Creek bounding us on both sides.

We have been working very hard ever since I arrived, and what has been accomplished is really marvellous. The house here was scarcely finished when Mr. Ellington left on account of failing health, and Archdeacon Macdonald put one of the native catechists in charge, who allowed a number of Indians to have free run of the house, and the state of filth and disorder when we took possession was really terrible. However, with much hard work and patience, a good cleaning has been effected, many repairs carried out, partitions made in the rooms, besides tables and benches, and hanging up the school bell. I have taken up my quarters for the present in a good-sized loft, which is divided into three rooms by means of curtains. I have my own furniture round me, which came quite safely, my chairs and little tables and

carpet and mats, all the dear home treasures of pictures and photographs, with my bookshelves which are quite full, so you may think of me as very snug and comfortable, although with only sloping rafters. I sit at my window and look at the beautiful Yukon flowing by so stately and yet swiftly, and at the Eastern mountains which I tell myself lie towards Salisbury! The quiet life and mountain air suit my health. There is no bustle or excitement here, but yet I have so much to do that I never feel dull. God has granted me the desire of my heart in bringing me back to my husband and my work amongst the Indians. My life henceforth is doubly consecrated to Him in humblest service.

Our household now consists of Mr. Totty, who is in training for Deacon's Orders, and two Indian girls whom I am training as servants (I expect shortly to have two more), besides the Bishop and myself. The school is close by, and we take it on alternate days until we can get a schoolmistress from England.

A church is begun, but it is infamously built, so we propose turning it into a schoolroom and trying to raise funds at once for a more satisfactory church. You can imagine the pleasant talks I had with dear Mrs. Canham, who felt so much for me in my having had to give up for so long a time the work to which I had consecrated my life.

BUXTON (ALSO CALLED FORTY MILE),
ST. JOHN'S MISSION.
August, 1892.

In vain I look and long for tidings from my dear ones. One realizes now our immense distance from civilization. Not only is there no Government mail,

but this is the first year that any stamps have been in the country, and there has been such a rush for them by the miners, that they are all sold already, so we have to trust to a happy chance of someone stamping and forwarding our letters from St. Michael.

August 18.

The Yukon steamer came in last night, which was the cause of much excitement. I heard a whistle and the shouting of the Indians, and William was up in a few minutes and off to the River, returning with several newspapers and a few letters, all more than a year old! We were very busy through the remainder of the night, writing, as the steamer returns at once.

September 1.

The Bishop is going off in the steamer to-morrow to Selkirk to see the Canhams, who are in a mess about their house. He will only be a short time absent, returning in a canoe. He is better in health than I have known him to be for years—except for these occasional attacks of cramp, which seize him at night, and are very severe—less depressed about his work and more hopeful, and full of all thoughtful kindness and consideration for me. He has roughed it so very much, and I can hardly persuade him even now to let me do anything to make him comfortable.

November 6.

I feel this long silence between us very deeply—it seems harder to bear as the months roll on. Were it not for our times of meeting in prayer and intercession one could hardly keep up under it. My life here is a very busy one, but just such a one as I love, with

plenty to do for the hands and heart, and not overtaxing the brain. Of course, some things one would wish very different, but apart from this, one has such a store of mercies as one could hardly deem possible to be vouchsafed to one so utterly unworthy. My dear husband is in so much better health since he came to this side of the Rockies.

Our Mission House is very small, but William, by dint of many clever contrivances, has made it warm and comfortable. Our rooms are all lined with what they call "drill" here (*we* should call it cotton twill), which is pasted on the walls and then painted red. The red gets sobered down by degrees and looks warm and our pictures look well on it.

In these regions winter sets in very early. We seem more thoroughly Arctic than at Fort Simpson, and everyone dresses accordingly. We wear such beautiful fur boots made of fur and deer-skin, or Russian shoes made of sheep-skin with the wool inside. They are warmer than moccasins, but still one has to wear warm stockings and blanket socks inside the shoes.

January 20, 1893.

We have been here six months. It seems much longer, for we have got into regular routine, and the weeks fly by only too quickly. The little Mission House is very plain and homely, and very small, as, especially in the winter, we have to live in the smallest space possible to economize fuel, as, of course, we burn only wood here. We have a good outer kitchen, but we can only use it in summer, as the air comes in between the logs at every chink, so, with the four Indian girls, we are confined to the three rooms, and they none of the largest, and I find it difficult to keep

them all in order. For the most part our days run thus :

William is up between five and six and kindly sees to the starting of the three stoves. I have a short, quiet time and then call up the girls, who dress and proceed to their different duties. "Tosca," whom I have made the cook, a fine handsome girl of fifteen, gets the breakfast, usually dried fish (always salmon here), tea, bread and butter. The latter, and flour, we get from the traders, and I make—myself—all the bread for the household. Before breakfast we go into the Bishop's study for prayers. I have a nice harmonium there and play a hymn when the keys are not too hard frozen.

The school bell rings at 9.30, and then comes a scramble to finish washing up, sweeping rooms, etc., and each girl comes to me for inspection before going in to school. Then Baby Mary and I have the house to ourselves. I make arrangements for dinner and then, if it is not too cold, take a short walk with baby, wrapped in her "parka," as it is called here—a pretty deer-skin coat with a hood coming over the face. It is very warm, and she looks so quaint and pretty in it. I shall try to send you home a parka to see. It is very merciful of God to let me have charge of another little Indian child. It was very painful at first, as she is just the age of my dear little Lucy the year we went to Fort Norman, and one seemed living over the past again, and at times almost forgot the interval of deep sorrow. But she is quite unlike my little "Owindia," except in some of her quaint Indian ways. She is really a lovely child with passionate black eyes. Her mother was a Chilkat Indian—a tribe which has always been very warlike, and given at times a

great deal of trouble. Mary's fits of passion are fearful. I was quite frightened the first time I saw her in one of them, when the small creature threw herself on the floor and rolled backwards and forwards across the room, roaring as loudly as she could. She clings to me with great affection, and if she wants anything coaxes very prettily by putting up her mouth to "kuss." One day last autumn she was thirsty, so with the pluck and independence of her nation and tribe, she toddled alone down the bank to the river's brim and there lay down and drank, sucking up the water with avidity. It was such a pretty picture! The great Yukon River rolling on its turbulent course of more than 2,000 miles, and the tiny child quenching her thirst out of it as if it had been only a saucer.

We are here in the centre of a large gold-mining district. Fresh creeks are constantly being prospected and found to be rich in ore and gold dust. These are most of them on American territory, but the access to the mines is from the British side. Miners are arriving every year in increasing numbers. About 350 are now stationed at Birch Creek, some 100 miles from Fort Yukon. They are already building houses, and have named their new settlement Circle City, being situated close to, if not within the Arctic Circle. The miners make this, Forty Mile Creek, their headquarters during the winter. They have built themselves neat, comfortable cabins, some of them with kitchen gardens. Many of them are well-educated men, far ahead of the low average level of the mining camps. But others, again, are of a very different type, and these come from their mines flush of money, ready to spend it in any way that will furnish them with comforts, luxuries, and amusements. And two first-class

traders are here, with well-equipped stores, containing every article that heart could fancy, from a flour-bag to a wedding ring (which latter article, alas, is perhaps the one least frequently asked for in the whole colony). Here is a good lending library and billiard-room. Here at least six saloons, several restaurants, and a theatre. We can also boast of two doctors, two blacksmiths, one watchmaker, and one dressmaker, with the latest fashions from Duncan. And, worse than all these, there are several distilleries where rum or whisky is made and sold to the Indians, and they have learned to make it for themselves, and that other highly intoxicating spirit called "Hoochino." Thus our Indians, being brought into contact with the white man, fall in only too easily with his taste for luxury, love of gambling, coarse, vile language, and for the miserable and ruthless degradation of women. Our American citizen would scorn to marry an Indian; indeed, by an iniquitous law of his country he is forbidden to do so; but the higher law of God he can set aside and ignore. The sweet, oval face and laughing eyes of our Indian girl please him; he knows that she can be made as deft with her hands, as tidy and orderly, as skilful with her needle as any white woman. She is sadly, deplorably vain, poor child, and a gay shawl or two, a pair of gold ear-rings, will sorely tempt her, as the bag of flour has tempted her father to wink at the transaction.

Yet even we are not without some gleams to cheer us, some light amid the clouds to whisper hope and comfort. We have, thank God, a few, too few, yet each time an increasing number of Indian communicants. There are some of our men making strenuous efforts to keep from drink. We have heard of some

leaving this neighbourhood and going off into the woods to be out of the way of temptation. Throughout the last winter, with a temperature as low as 55° and 64° below zero, when the lamps would hardly burn from the frozen oil, we never failed to have our little band of worshippers at Evensong; men holding their ears from the cold, women wrapped in their blankets, little ones toddling along in their rabbit-skin coats, would hasten in at the sound of the mission bell, and join reverently in the prayers and singing.

It is well for these Indians that their Bishop is as at home in Tukudh as in many other Indian languages. The variety of tongues we meet with is a serious difficulty in the work. We have at present but five mission children boarding with us, but amongst these are three distinct languages.

The Bishop contemplates opening another mission beyond Selkirk, where are a number of heathen Indians who have never yet heard the sound of the Gospel.

Extracts from Journal

January 29, 1893.

It is a strange state of things here, for there is no law and no magistrate. The miners have their own code of laws, which are, for the most part, pretty fair, and they often do most generous acts among themselves and to others also. By-the-by, on Christmas Day a deputation of miners came up to see us and presented me with a gold nugget worth about £10 in honour of my being the first white lady who has wintered so far north.

As to my health, this last and closing chapter of my life exhibits quite a new condition of things. I am

wonderfully stronger and able to get through a very tolerable amount of work in the day, feeling none the worse at night, except natural tire.

May 22, 1893.

By the great mercy of God I have been greatly comforted and refreshed by four of your letters brought over from Juneau, on the Pacific coast, by the first miners. I must begin by saying, in answer to your cravings for news of us, that we are quite well, thank God, having all of us, including Mr. Totty, Bishop, and myself,with the Indian girls, now seven in number, passed through the eight months' winter without one day's illness, or any sufferings to speak of from the cold.

It was comforting to feel the sun, which we had not seen at all for six weeks, gaining daily, and the days lengthening. The snow melted gradually, and little bits of green grass appeared from time to time. Then a fly upon our window, which caused great excitement to little Baby Mary, then came snow-birds, and ducks and geese and snipe and the dear swallows. Large spaces of open water then appeared upon the river, growing larger and larger, and last Friday (May 12) at 10.30 p.m. came the sound of rushing wind or water, and behold! all the river was in motion, the great mass of ice moving along suddenly, while huge blocks five or six feet thick were tossed up on the banks as if they were only foam. It has been interesting to watch the disappearance of the ice. As soon as the great Yukon was clear of its own share, down came the Pelly River ice, and then that of the White River and more from the lakes north of this.

This letter will have to wait for another month, when

the steamer comes in. I have many to write before this great annual mail starts.

I am thankful that you had our letters which were taken out by the miners to Juneau in April.

A petition has been sent to Washington for a monthly mail from Juneau, and I trust this may be granted to us, as it would make a great difference in communication.

Our short summer is drawing to a close—there are already many signs of autumn coming on. Our winter store of wood is lying near the house on the bank, in the shape of great trees which were cut down and brought here on a raft. A man is engaged to cut them into small logs and faggots to fit each stove. It has cost us £60 to get all this done, but it is a splendid lot of dry wood, and will, I hope, last throughout the winter.

Our birds have all ceased singing. The song of one of them is very sweet, and is exactly the first three bars of the slow movement of Haydn's "Surprise Symphony." The swallows are leaving us already; they skim over the Yukon just the same as over the Fraser, or the pretty little river at Salisbury with that charming view of the cathedral and the Chancellor's garden.

Our Sundays are very peaceful. The Indian service is at ten o'clock, and we have a good number at it. The English service immediately afterwards, when some of the miners come, and we hope the number will increase. The singing is very nice and hearty, especially at the Indian service. The Indians are very musical and have good voices. I enjoy teaching them, and they so respond to all one's efforts and take a real interest in the service. Some of them are fine manly

fellows, beside whom a great proportion of the miners look small and pitiful. If we could only get more clergy out here !

August 30.

The steamer just come in and all is bustle and confusion. We have a large mail of letters and newspapers, but your package is not come, and I wanted many of the things I sent for. Never mind ! I must wait patiently and hope for it in another nine or twelve months !

A Mrs. Beaumont, wife of one of the traders, came up from St. Michael to have her first baby baptized. "Mary Yukana" behaved very prettily, and is said to be the first white child born within the Arctic Circle.

Since then W. has been very busy opening our Mission goods which have come from London. We have two large bales of clothing for our Indians, and such nice boxes of books from the S.P.C.K. and the R.T.S. These are especially valuable for the miners. Also a bale of splendid blankets ; these are most welcome in every way, and you need have no fears as to our not being warm enough this winter.

W. is most anxious to have a Syriac Lexicon sent out. I hope it may come with my packages next year.

December, 1893.

A friendly miner is going off on business to Juneau and offers to take letters to post there for the Mission, making an exception to the general charge of these men of one dollar a letter, and conveying ours free. I have, therefore, the unexpected pleasure of sending you some tidings from Upper Yukon in midwinter. For ourselves, I have, of God's mercy, only good to

report. We are weathering the winter, which is pretty severe just now, without suffering or any great hardship. By dint of constant effort during the last two months W. has got our house into a far more warm and comfortable condition than it has been before. He has had all our rooms lined with what is called here "drill," a coarse strong calico, and then covered with a thick coating of red paint. The schoolroom was the last to be papered, but we fear it will be lost labour here, for the cold was so severe (that is, 50° below zero) that the paste froze on the wall before it could dry (in spite of a large fire), and all the paper is cracking.

Our great business of the day is getting in our wood and water. It is so picturesque a scene that I must describe it.

At twelve o'clock Miss M. and the children come out of school and the five elder mission girls muster on the bank—all wrapped up to their noses and with their fur mittens on—and run down to the water hole, which is some short distance out on the river. The girls all carry pails, and the Bishop precedes them with an ice chisel and axe to open the water hole, which has to be done anew every day. Then he bales out the water and the girls run up to the house, where there are one or two large water-kegs close to the stoves. It takes three or four pails to fill the two kegs, at each of which Miss M. stands to empty the pails into them, or the children are sure to spill the water, which immediately becomes ice.

After this they are all summoned to get in wood. Our firewood is now chopped and piled on the top of the bank, extending for fifty or sixty yards, and is six feet high. The girls put the billets of wood into a neat

little sledge which the Bishop has had made and haul it in, and then carry them in to the woodboxes in the different rooms.

It is wonderful how much wood we consume this weather. I fear that our large pile will hardly carry us till spring.

It is a comfort that the children all like the wood and water business and think it high fun. Yesterday, with glowing cheeks, they assured me it was not at all cold. At that time in the middle of the day, with a bright sun, the thermometer was 50° below zero.

Our greatest trials just now are the very short days. Miss M. says she is quite out of breath trying to catch up her time. We shall lose the sun now for some weeks. He has been rising later and later and describing a smaller arch each day, but one has still most lovely colouring at the time of rise and set, and then the gloaming is so passing beautiful.

I often think when I turn out in the morning at eight o'clock it must be like the light on the first day of creation, when God said: "Let there be Light."

I have been so mercifully kept in health, hardly ever a headache, and my digestion is so much stronger that I can live on the porridge and dried fish, which is now our principal food, without suffering as I did at first. In spite of all this, however, I feel the infirmities of age coming rapidly upon me. My hair is growing grey, and I have had to take to spectacles, when I can get them, but alas! according to the invariable practice of old ladies, I am for ever losing them! And yet one's inner man is still youthful enough.

Our household goes on very peacefully and happily. Miss Millett is a real blessing to us. She is a thorough Irish girl and a good churchwoman. She gets on well

with everybody. The children are devoted to her, and she keeps them in first-rate order. One comfort is that she has good health and is not troubled with nerves. She bears the cold manfully, and was only a little startled lately when her blanket at night was fringed with icicles from her breath freezing. The Bishop is teaching her Tukudh, which she takes to very diligently. We work at it together in an evening when I have time. I am understanding it more and more easily and can even now follow the prayers and join in the hymns at the Indian services and make the Indians understand me in some degree. The children go on nicely and are much improved. My little Mary was three years old on the 21st, St. Thomas' Day. I produced a home-made scrap-book, truly of scraps, which caused her excessive delight.

January 16, 1894.

The letters which were to have started ten days since are still delayed, our good miner having been forced to postpone his start in consequence of a severe spell of cold. How severe you will understand when I tell you that for some days our thermometer ranged between 60° and 70° below zero, and for two days went down to 73° and 75°. It was a very sharp experience, such as I had never before undergone, and certainly was trying enough, but God's hand sustained us and we were kept in health and in good spirits all the time. Even this low temperature is endurable so long as the air is still, but, if the least wind rises, it requires very strong courage and resolution to take a walk. But our North-West attire is such as to render us almost impervious to cold and our "brave north-easters," and even 100° of frost fail to penetrate our

seal-skin, long-legged boots, and deer-skin "parquets," which parquets are a coat and hood all in one, the latter completely covering the head and forehead, and is edged with a thick fringe of grey wolf fur. One night during the intense cold we had a most glorious aurora and were obliged to stand outside and watch it, with only our eyes uncovered in spite of everything. I cannot describe to you the beauty of the colouring which shot across the sky. The very heavens seemed to open in a beauty which one cannot describe.

Can you imagine the cold of the handle of a kettle on the fire being so intense that one cannot touch it, while the kettle itself is boiling? The temperature has now moderated and we can breathe more comfortably, although you will not think 46° (below zero) very mild.

We welcomed the first disc of the sun back on January 7. We had had no sun above our horizon for nearly six weeks, and so we hailed his return almost with shouts and acclamations. Yet in these snowy regions our winter nights are by no means of pitchy darkness. Even had we no aurora to shed its consecrated gleams upon our sky, the reflection from our bright carpet of snow is enough to make visible most of the surrounding landscape. Our twilight also is so long that, even when the sun does not rise at all, there are lovely streaks of day-dawn in the south-east in the early morning, and the last streak will not expire till nearly 5 p.m.

It is very pretty to see one of our Mission children often seated on the ground with a group of Indian women around her, showing and carefully explaining Scripture prints. The exclamations of amazement and admiration are wonderful, and the intelligence and

interest they evince are very interesting. I have a choir practice every week and our children sing from notes. The men sing from ear and are very correct. W. is preparing several of them for H.C. at Easter. There is so very much to be gone through before they could be prepared. Deep mire to be trodden through and many erring ways set right, but some of them are very hopeful.

But I must not say more. W. protests against every letter I write. In truth, my brain is weak. I feel writing at all an increasing difficulty. I have to write a little and then run out for a breath of air. I fear that my various falls on the ice have certainly injured my spine and this tells upon the poor brain. Still I plod on in hope. I cannot tell you how precious some of the books that you have sent are to me. Of the large parcel that you speak of nothing has been heard as yet. Maybe it will arrive in July after two years' wandering !

To L. C. W.

S.S. "Arctic,"
Yukon River (En Route for Buxton and Selkirk).
July 20, 1894.

. . . I have come down the river to meet a young lady friend of mine, Miss Macdonald, who is come out from Scotland to take charge of the school at Selkirk. Last year we had an Irish lady join us for the same object. The C.M.S. will not send us any men, so we are driven at present to work on for the rising generation of Indians, and the Bishop and his two (!) clergy itinerate as far as may be among the scattered tribes of the diocese of 200,000 square miles.

St. John's, Buxton,
Upper Yukon,
Alaska.
January 25, 1895.

In our slow-going monotonous existence time flies amazingly rapidly, strange to say. We are an active, busy household of eight—the Bishop, Miss Macdonald, our five Mission children, and myself. I think we may say we have not one half-hour unoccupied from dawn to dewy eve. Of our Mission work I cannot say there is much, if any, progress or improvement to record, and yet there have been a few little chinks of light amid the general darkness, for which one feels glad and thankful—*i.e.*, on Advent Sunday we had a celebration at which seventeen Indians communicated, and the earnest and reverent demeanour of our dear people at the service was very touching. Moreover, some of the young men came to the Mission the next day to ask the Bishop if they might go hunting, or was it *not too soon after their Communion?* Then I do not think the whisky making and drinking has been quite as bad this year. We fancy that both Indians and white men were scared by the visit of a Revenue officer last summer and his intimation that police will be sent in this year to put a stop to whisky traffic. And yet the immorality of the place is, I fear, as bad as ever, although several families of white people came in last summer who seem fairly respectable. One ought to have a missionary from the S.P.G. for these poor white men ; it is terrible to think of such numbers being massed together without any church ministrations whatever.

[In 1896, Mrs. Bompas was summoned to England to the bedside of her sister, who was dangerously ill.

EVANGELICAL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

On her way she rested a few days in Ottawa, and in September wrote to her friend L. C. W.*]

THE CLOSE,
SALISBURY.
September, 1896.

Just a month since I landed in Liverpool . . . after the pleasant five days with you in August, when you so kindly responded to my telegram and received the wayworn wanderer. . . . Since my arrival in Salisbury I have been terribly idle—it took some time, I found, to recover from the strain of the last two months. The shock of meeting my dear sister was rather severe. I was hardly prepared to find her quite so thin and fragile . . . but her rallying powers and tenacity of life are wonderful . . . we are very happy and thankful.

I had very kind welcomes from many friends, and many invitations, but I cannot make up my mind to run away just at present, and the English railways try me so much that I shudder at the very thought of them.

To L. C. W.

THE CLOSE,
SALISBURY.
Holy Innocents, December 28, 1896.

. . . I am jogging along pretty well, grumbling a little (one always does find something to grumble at) at the English climate, which is so damp and dismal after beautiful, dry, sunny Canada. . . . We had a lovely bright Christmas Day and glorious services. My thoughts were with you and in Montreal, and in

* Miss L. C. Wickstead, Ottawa.

Alaska, as you may fancy. I am heartbroken to find that the much-talked-of Canadian Government contract with Alaska to carry our winter mails has not come to anything—it only holds good for the summer.

To L. C. W.

De Veux Place,
Salisbury.
June 12, 1897.

I fully hoped and intended to go back via Canada; I have been counting upon this and looking forward to it for months past, but Providence (ordering certain course of events) has interposed and made it impossible for me to leave England before July 12, which only allows me just time by the quickest route to reach 'Frisco by August 1, the day when the last boat for St. Michael sails. Things have been rather vexing and contrary! I have paid ten visits since Easter, have held several drawing-room meetings, and have about £200 towards our Mission church! . . . My sister is so well and bright now. We do not speak about my leaving, but she knows it has to be, and she said she felt I was right to go back to my husband and work.

CHAPTER IX

SECOND JOURNEY TO THE YUKON

JOURNEY TO THE YUKON, 1897

S.S. "EXCELSIOR,"
PACIFIC OCEAN.
July 31, 1897.

I WILL take up the thread of my history and go back to July 27, the last day of my long journey by train. I was much disappointed in the scenery of the great American Continent, which is not to be compared to the beautiful C.P.R. We passed through richly cultivated land, acres and acres of maize and corn with thousands of cattle feeding in rich pasturage.

Then, at last, when we reached the grand old Rockies the scenery became beautiful, but during all that time we were running through miles of snow-sheds, so that we missed it. A great part of the C.N.R. runs through the American desert, in which are Salt Lake and Salt Lake City. Nothing but sand with tufts of scanty vegetation. At length, after travelling for four and a half days, always in the train, we reached the Sacramento River, to cross which the whole train is put on a ferry boat and ferried across. We had forty carriages, and it was wonderful to feel oneself suddenly on the water and hear it gurgling under carriage and ferry. I had a kind welcome at the great Occidental Hotel, where the proprietor recognized me at once. He immediately assigned me a

charming room with bathroom attached, and much I revelled in a warm bath and some blessed sleep after those jogging railroad days.

The next day was full of business and eight o'clock found me at breakfast in the beautiful large room amidst such profusion of fruit, peaches, pears, raspberries, strawberries, etc. Then I hurried off to despatch my telegram home and afterwards to our Alaskan agents to ascertain as to my berth on board the steamer. The excitement about the Klondyke gold mines has surpassed everything. I was interviewed at the hotel at San Francisco and perpetually questioned about Alaska and the Yukon.

Alas! our quiet tranquil North is invaded, no more peace there. The whole country is to be opened up. The U.S. Government is sending soldiers to Circle City—a railroad is to be begun, regular mails started.

We were nearly an hour getting off, for passengers came on board to the very last, although they had the greatest difficulty in getting through the crush of people.

At length the signal was given, the gangway removed amid deafening cheers and frantic waving of hats, the *Excelsior,* with her load of miners, set out for St. Michael. Even then we were not really off, for two or three wretched stowaways were discovered, and had to be put off in a small boat, which took some little time.

St. Michael,
Alaska.
August 26, 1897.

I am encamped in my tent on the shore with my tent door open, facing the bay, and the Union Jack above me. The bay is very gay now with ships of all

kinds and small "caiaques," etc. My tent looks pretty and comfortable with my boxes and cases around me serving for furniture and seats for my visitors, of whom I have several each day. This afternoon I am expecting Bishop Rowe.

St. Michael is a dull, uninteresting place, but I have found some employment in helping one of our better-class Indian women nurse her poor old Malamout mother through the last stage of internal cancer. Last Saturday the poor thing died, after much suffering, and this morning we laid her to rest amid her Russian kinsfolk. Bishop Rowe took the service, as the Greek priest did not come in time.

I hope to start to-morrow in the steamship *Alice*. We shall be terribly crowded, but the weather is somewhat cooler. I have Sir Richard Owen's Life with me to read up the river.

S.S. "Alice,"
Yukon River,
Alaska.
September 6, 1897.

We are fairly off at last, but the boat is most uncomfortably crowded. This steamer can accommodate only forty and we have ninety on board.

The way in which gold is cropping up all over the country is marvellous, and the quickness of the miner's eye to detect it is no less so. Yesterday we stopped at a small camp to take in wood, and some of the miners amused themselves by taking up small pans full of sand out of the river. In a few minutes they had got gold to the amount of 15 cents.

I found here quite a number of friends among the Indians. One of my Mission girls, Ellen, presented herself to me as Mrs. Finny, the wife of one of the

traders, and the husband gave me such a good account of his little wife. I was thankful to see her married and doing well.

To-morrow we hope to reach Fort Yukon, to spend a few hours within the Arctic Circle.

September 13, 1897.

I have been made rather anxious by reports among the Indians of the water being very low higher up the river, and that Mr. H. expects that I shall have to spend the winter with him in his small house, as he feels sure the steamer will not get up to Forty Mile.

Rather more than a month since we left St. Michael and I am still far from the end of my long journey. I begin to feel very wayworn and weary, but yet I have such deep cause for thankfulness, for I have been comforted and helped in so many ways. The last day or two rain has set in and we are all rejoicing, hoping that this may raise the river. A white man passed us this morning in a small boat, and cried out: "You cannot get up the river; too little water, in some parts only two and a half feet." And our boat draws four feet!

I have been writing some verses for the miners' paper, *The Yukon Press*. They all behave very nicely to me and would do anything I asked them.

Fort Yukon.
September 14, 1897.

Alas! the situation is most serious and I am in great trouble. There is a bar of sand between this and Circle City which it seems impossible to get over! We have been waiting here for two days. Mr. Hawksley tells me that he foresees that I shall have

to spend the winter with his family. Still do I hope that this may not be. More letters have come to me from the Bishop urging me to come as quickly as possible. Oh, what can I do? Our Captain is a good man and is going to make one more trial.

November 29, 1897.

After a day or two passed in much anxiety at Fort Yukon, the Captain of the s.s. *Alice* gave up all attempts at proceeding, and ordered the passengers ashore, allowing us only the option of returning to St. Michael.

It was strange that directly the s.s. *Alice* left the water began to rise—in one night it rose sixteen inches. Had our Captain waited but three days longer I could have reached my home in safety. As it was, we were stranded here, a motley crowd, with only about five or six small cabins in which to find shelter.

My hope then was that we might get on in the *Victoria* which was expected. I had two or three weeks of agonizing suspense and anxiety about her non-arrival, fearing to lose this, my only chance, of getting home. She appeared at last to announce the doleful tidings that, hearing of the low state of the water, and being heavily laden, the Captain had discharged the Mission supplies at Fort Hamlyn, contenting himself with only bringing up the invoices! Mortifying though it was to do so, I asked earnestly for a passage on board the *Victoria* to Forty Mile, but I was actually refused, although she passed it on her way to Klondyke, and the vessel steamed off, seeing Mr. H. and myself rowing up to her at full speed and only a few yards from her.

I must pass over that time of very great distress,

through which God mercifully helped me, but it was almost overwhelming.

A letter came at last from my dear husband telling of his having necessary supplies for the winter. It really seemed to have been brought to him almost by a miracle, so that I might have gone up after all, and he greatly laments my not doing so, blaming my want of faith, and is vexed with Mr. H. for having detained me. So I have had to settle down to a winter within the Arctic Circle. Some of my adventures would really rival Nansen's, who, by-the-by, was a schoolfellow of my friend, Mr. Inglestadt, of St. Michael.

I am staying with the Hawksleys, so to speak—that is, I take meals with them, but I have a small compartment curtained off in the schoolroom, which is close to the Mission House and built by Mr. H. since his arrival here last July. They have only two small bedrooms, and as they have four boys of their own, I am thankful not to be in the house itself. It is very, very cold, and I feel lonesome at night, the northern winds whistling round me and dogs howling, with wolves prowling about far too near to be agreeable. There is no room, however, now for more distrust or anxiety when I know that the dear husband and his household are kept from starvation, and he reports them as all well.

Mr. H. and I keep school daily. We have as many as fifty children, and it is very interesting work, only we are terribly handicapped for want of school materials. We have no slates, only a few broken pieces or fragments of slate pencils; no copy-books whatever, only some sheets of whitey-brown paper which I begged from the Company's stores. I have to write out alphabets and spelling and copies on this paper for

the standard lesson books for our elder classes ; I have to compose thrilling stories and adventures of Rose and Ben. Our schoolroom is used also for the church services, but is far too small for our numbers. For benches we put planks on empty cases, and for seats blocks of wood. In spite of all difficulties, however, the children are getting on and by degrees taming down, for a wilder or more undisciplined set of little ruffians than they were at first it would be hard to find out of the Zoological Gardens.

Letter to J—— 1898.

I must now tell you a little about the gold mines of Klondyke, which were only struck last year, soon after I left Buxton in July. The news of the finding of gold soon spread like wildfire. Men who were already here rushed up the river with pickaxe and shovel. In a few weeks they made thousands of dollars, then they went out with their loaded bags, boasting of their wealth. The newspapers took it up, and trading companies and shipping agents, etc. A perfect fever seemed to seize everyone who heard of the Klondyke gold mines. It spread all over the States, Canada, and California. It reached Africa and Syria, Australia and Finland, Norway and Denmark. We have men here from all these countries, coming in by every possible means of conveyance, in crowds ever increasing, paying fabulous sums for their passage and outfit and provisions, many of them leaving wife and family and good lucrative positions, seized with the mania for gold, as ignorant as babes of all which this involves, or of the difficulties which lay before them.

Now comes the sad part of our story. The rush was so sudden, and the summer in these regions of so short duration, that it was hardly possible to make provision for such a multitude. There were only a few steamers fit to go up the river. Moreover, the water of the Yukon last summer was very low, lower than it has ever been known before, so that any heavily laden vessels were liable to stick on the many sand-bars. All the vessels were heavily loaded, and, sad to say, not with flour and other necessaries, but with tons, thousands of tons of whisky, which pays better than anything else. And so you may fancy the result of all this. Klondyke, the quiet little Indian camp, only about fifty miles from Buxton, our Mission, is now a large city with a white population of some seven thousand, all with their "claims" of gold diggings. There are streets of well-built houses, a good-sized hospital, a theatre, and about fifteen drinking saloons. The Bishop has three men working there as missionaries. The finds of gold are enormous, one is ever hearing of new discoveries; but the people are starving! The supplies are quite unequal to the population. Things have been selling at famine prices for a long time. One hundred dollars for a bag of flour, two dollars for a candle, etc. One hears piteous tales of men bringing in bags of gold dust, and entreating for a little food for their wives and children and being refused. Then sickness began, for in all this haste there were few sanitary arrangements. There have been several deaths already, and now there has begun a stampede out of Dawson, by which name the great city is known. Men *must* have food, and they heard that supplies were more plentiful at Circle City and Fort Yukon, so they came away in

crowds, and went through fearful risks as they fell in with the ice, and were nearly starved on the way. Every day, almost, some poor miners come down from the starving city, some of them having been days without food. Things have even been so bad that a week or two ago a number of miners threatened to attack the store here and seize all the provisions needed. They assembled with guns and rifles, and actually a few shots were fired. Captain Ray, of the U.S. Army, who was sent out last summer to try and keep order, met the insurgents with his lieutenants, and managed to reduce things to order, but he had to give vouchers for the Government supply of rations to all the destitute.

I spent a few days at the great Klondyke in the fall, and enjoyed my visit very much. I stayed at the Mission with Mr. and Mrs. Bowen, *née* Millett. They have a nice little house, so tiny, "three sparrows might dance on the floor," and Mr. Bowen has built a neat little church, all in order. The Toronto W.A. sent a lovely altar cloth, etc., and he has nice, hearty services, at which the church is crowded. From the Mission House I used to watch the crowds of people passing all day long, all busy and intent on making money. The mines proper are some few miles away. The labour involved in working the "claims" is not to be told, and many lives are lost and many strong men broken down. Oh! the pitiful stories one hears of treachery and dishonesty. And so many come in quite unprepared for the rigorous climate, and go through so much misery and privation. One poor man here had both hands and feet amputated from frost-bite, and another has lost his right hand and left foot. There are three hospitals at Dawson, and several

churches, and fine barracks for the Mounted Police, and about fifteen saloons. The shady characters are numerous, and keep the police pretty busy. Last time we heard there were sixty prisoners in gaol.

We, on our little island, keep on much the same as ever. The mining excitement does not affect us. Bishop holds school twice a day, except Tuesdays and Fridays, when I have sewing and music class. I have a singing class for the elder boys and girls, too, twice a week. The Indians do not improve altogether in their intercourse with the white man. They learn extravagant habits, and get too dependent on luxuries, and have raised their prices upon meat and fish and labour.

Think of me in a small two-roomed house on the banks of the Yukon, one room being used by Mrs. Beaumont, a trader's wife, whose husband is away. Rather close quarters, is it not? I have been here two months, but hope to move into the Mission soon. Mr. Hawksley, the priest-in-charge, was in Mackenzie and ordained by Bishop ten years ago. I have still some hope of getting up to Forty Mile by dog sleigh, but fear I might collapse before I reach my journey's end.

* * * * *

[After eight long months, the winter's ice having at length run out of the river. Mrs. Bompas was able to continue her journey to Forty Mile. A gap occurs here in her Journal—we know that the Bishop after a time went to Moosehide and she remained at Forty Mile, where the Rev. W. Hawksley was stationed, after having been some years at Fort Yukon. Mrs. Bompas's health failed and she was forced to try to rejoin her husband.]

FORTY MILE.
April 20, 1899.

I have been most anxious about the Bishop, who has had three attacks of scurvy. It is most depressing and lowering. It comes from deterioration of the blood, and the heart loses power to pump properly. He said when he stood up it felt like standing on hot coals, so he *had* to lie down. He looked very ill, his face ashen grey, pain in all the limbs, and distressing cough. In spite of all this he would not see a doctor, although we had a very good one here and a number at Dawson. I persuaded him to take a little spruce fir tea, which did him a little good, and I got him a few potatoes at two shillings a pound, as raw potatoes are supposed to be a specific in scurvy. I felt very anxious. It was the first time I had seen him ill since we married. He is all right now, D.G., but the disease is apt to return, so one feels anxious and nervous.

We had one other case of illness this winter in one of our children, a kind of malaria fever, but more like gastric. The dear child was very ill for three weeks, and made a very slow recovery. The Bishop and I generally differ as to diagnosis. He treats in the old style with jalap and calomel, and I with aconite, belladonna and nux, etc. That the patient recovers under the circumstances is truly wonderful ; of course, if he does so, it is thanks to my remedies, and if he dies, *vice versa!*

CHAPTER X

MOOSEHIDE

(1900)

To L. C. W.

MOOSEHIDE, NEAR DAWSON,
P.O. BOX 28,
YUKON TERRITORY.
May 29, 1900.

IF pen and ink could fly as swiftly as thoughts, you would have had many a folio from me during our long winter months. But I am cumbered a little with the weight of years (I was seventy on my last birthday), a little more by infirmities which have beset me of late, among others a rather protracted attack of bronchitis, from which I have as yet only partially recovered. Yet, indeed, do not think I am melancholy myself or would make you so. I hope that mine is a green old age, and I do enjoy a joke as much as ever.

I spent most of the winter at Forty Mile in a small house on the mainland (Mr. Hawksley and family being in the large Mission House on the Island). He is in charge of the Indians and also the white population of Forty Mile. I only stayed part of the winter at Forty Mile, being fairly broken down by the cares of housekeeping. The Indian women make so much now by working for the white men that they do not care to go to service, and I found it impossible to get any girl to help me on any terms! Our elder girls

have been leaving us one by one, and the Bishop wishes to give up the charge of Indian children, which has been a pretty heavy charge for the last twenty-five years. So at Forty Mile, for six months, I had to be my own cook and housekeeper, etc., besides taking care of our two little Mission boys (who lost no possible opportunity for getting into mischief), and helping Mr. Hawksley look after the sick Indians, of whom we had a sadly large number. So (as I said before) I broke down and kicked my traces and determined to come off to Moosehide, where the husband was, who hoped I was faring comfortably at Forty Mile.

. . . A kind friend appeared in a Mr. Ohneck, a young American of German descent, and he offered to take me to Moosehide, where he thought I ought to be, and then he busied himself to find four dogs, which I hired at a dollar a day, and a nice easy sleigh, and a splendid fur robe to wrap round me! So, having heard of all this only last Sunday evening, on Monday morning we started off with thermometer at 40° below zero (it had been 74°!), the Indians mustering on the bank to shake hands; also the Hawksleys helping to pack me up and kindly taking charge of my two boys, for the time. It was a venture, of course, and I had to face the possibility of having to turn back from jolting on the ice hummocks and rough trail, etc., but indeed, so far from this, the air and change of scene seemed to revive me, and my good friend took such care of me, stopping now and again to tuck my robe and blanket in a little tighter, etc., and the four dogs ran along so merrily and their bells rang so cheerily on the frosty air, and by two o'clock we reached the first "road-house," sixteen

miles from Forty Mile, where some hot tea and bread and butter was awaiting us and a good warm by the stove fire, where I was glad to rub and thaw out one of my heels, which, in spite of all wraps, had nearly frozen.

We reached the second "road-house" that evening and found a crowd of miners on their way to Nome, a rough-looking set of men, but all pleasant and civil. I think we met about fifty that day and a few women (one from Cape Kotzebue). I had a nice supper of salmon and blackberry jam, etc., and then a good night, and by soon after eight o'clock the next morning we were off once more, Mr. O. having given our dogs their breakfast of dried dog-salmon. The dear things were quite impatient to be off. Mr. O. runs behind the sleigh and only guides them by shouting and talking to them, which they seem quite to understand, turning to the right at the word "Gee" and to the left for "Chaw."

On we went, the day wore on, I was getting tired and cold, but the thought of husband and home kept me up. The Mission House came in sight, we stopped before it, and I ran up the bank to find the door locked and the house tenantless. The Bishop had started that morning to walk to Forty Mile!

William had been urging me to come here for some time past, and when at last some Indians told him I was sick, he became worried and anxious and at last determined to judge for himself the state of things with me. He was in no condition to travel, having only just recovered from a fourth attack of his old enemy, brought on, I suppose, by the cold.

ANGELICAL THEOLOGY

To L. C. W.

July 13, 1900.

I think my last letter was written at Moosehide, where I spent the latter part of the winter. I came down to Forty Mile just a month since primarily to try change of air to shake off the remains of bronchitis which still clings to me.

My second object in coming was to pack up house and furniture and personal effects for a great move to White Horse, or Caribou, at the southern part of the diocese, where the Bishop is bent on starting two new missions.

We shall have to take to tent life while our cabin is building. We hope to have Mr. and Mrs. Bowen back some time to start the other Mission. I rather like the idea of the other end of the diocese. The worst of it is that we have to disperse our Mission children ! We have had little folks around us for so many years now, and I do get so terribly fond of them, however bad they are, that I miss them sadly and seem to have lost an object in life.

We have had a scare this week in hearing that small-pox is in Dawson ; the Bishop is busy vaccinating all the Moosehide Indians under their strong protest and remonstrances.

CHAPTER XI

CARCROSS

(1901—1906)

[" YEARS of strenuous work were telling upon the Bishop's gigantic constitution, and he began to realize that ere long he must lay down the staff of office. For some time he had his attention turned towards the southern portion of the diocese, to the Indians who were gathered at Caribou Crossing, which had become quite an important railway centre. In August, 1901, he and Mrs. Bompas bade farewell to all at Forty Mile and started on their journey up the river."]*

CARIBOU CROSSING,
YUKON TERRITORY.
December 18, 1900.

I am no longer the busy over-occupied person I used to be. Our Mission children are now made over into the hands of a Mr. and Mrs. Gordon. Mr. G. is an Oxford M.A., and well-experienced in educational and mission work. Mrs. G. is an American, active and energetic, who takes kindly to the children, even to the two little Boers who led me such a life last year, and so, you understand, Mr. Gordon is head of Selkirk Diocesan School, Forty Mile, and assistant priest of St. James' Church for the white men, while Mr. Hawksley is in charge of the Indian Mission—St. John's, Buxton.

* Extracts from " An Apostle of the North."

This is a lovely spot, and the climate far more moderate than on the Yukon, and we are 500 miles nearer Canada and England, and we get letters from England in three weeks and newspapers all thro' the winter. So it is not wonderful that I should feel better here and seem to have taken a new lease of life. Yet I fear the chances of my visiting you are but small (much as I should like to do so), because of the expense, for the husband has been straining every nerve to start two new Mission stations—Christ Church, White Horse (about forty miles from here) and this one of Caribou, which the Bishop is now holding.

The demands upon the episcopal finances have been many, and rather severe, and we have to economize in every direction, but are thankful to be helped on day by day and for the few gleams of light which at times come even upon Selkirk.

May 8, 1901.

I have been very ill. I went to White Horse for my Easter Communion, and soon after my return I was seized with severe pneumonia, followed by bronchitis. I have turned the corner now. I suffered terribly—had bags of ice all round my body. I have been most tenderly and lovingly nursed and cared for. Mrs. Bowen came from White Horse and stayed a fortnight. All my white neighbours, too, were most kind. I have fresh milk provided for me every day, and new laid eggs—the first time for twenty-seven years (in the North) that I have had such luxuries.

Carcross, Past and Present

[The earliest data in the history of this place are suggested by its original name—Caribou Crossing.

About ten years ago this was changed to Carcross for the following reasons: First, because Caribou Crossing was too long for the address of letter or document; secondly, because there were two other places named Caribou in the North-West, causing endless confusion in the postal department; thirdly, Bishop Bompas, then resident in Caribou, had been asked to suggest another name for the place, and whereas formerly the deer, when about to cross the lake, had with their usual animal sagacity chosen that narrow part for their crossing, so when the magnates of the Yukon and White Pass Railway had hit upon the same locality to build their bridge, and the railway cars and ponderous engine had usurped the place of the graceful deer, the name of "Carcross" at once suggested itself to him, and was by the majority of the residents in the neighbourhood looked upon with favour. True, there were some dissentient voices even in that small community; we doubt if, at the railway station, the name "Caribou Crossing" has ever yet been effaced, and the question might to this day have remained in abeyance, had not a message come down from Ottawa stamped with unalterable decision: "The name is Carcross."

It was in the year 1901 that the Bishop and Mrs. Bompas came up the Yukon from Forty Mile to White Horse (then only known as a promising new mining camp and as the head of navigation for the steamboats down the river to St. Michael, Alaska). They spent one night at White Horse with Mr. and Mrs. Bowen in their tent (in which Mr. and Mrs. Bowen lived for some months till a house could be provided for them, and in which Mr. Bowen held services for the Indians and white men).]

The following morning (Mrs. Bompas writes) we proceeded to Carcross, a distance of forty miles along the side of the lake, passing the White Horse Rapids, where many a lusty but too venturesome miner has lost his life. Carcross had been selected by the Bishop as a suitable spot for starting a new mission station. There had hitherto been no one to minister to the Indians gathering there from time to time from Atlin, Teslin, Lake La Barge, and Little Salmon River; moreover, there was a station at Carcross of the Yukon and White Pass Railway, and it was certain that crowds of white men of every nationality would now be coming into the country, attracted by the gold-fields of Klondyke, Dawson, and Bonanza, etc. Many of these prospectors would come from Seattle or San Francisco to St. Michael and ascend the river to Dawson, but the larger number of them made use of the but recently completed magnificent railway passing the Divide at the summit, and there entering British territory.

The Bishop had placed Rev. Flewelling in charge at Dawson, Rev. J. Hawksley at Forty Mile, Ven. Archdeacon Canham at Selkirk, and Rev. R. Bowen at White Horse. It looked as if the Bishop's long cherished scheme to do something towards evangelizing the southern part of his large diocese was about to be realized.

There was, as far as we knew, no house awaiting us at Carcross. We were prepared for this possibility, and had brought a tent with us, although the prospect of a tent for our winter habitation was not encouraging. The only inhabitants then visible to our inquiring gaze were a couple of the Royal Mounted Police, the owner of the "Hotel Caribou," the stationmaster, and two

or three Indians from Skookum Jim's camp across the lake. We noticed one tidy looking tent a few yards from the railway station, which proved to be a road-house where travellers might get shelter and refreshment. It was kept by a respectable old Scotchman, who, on our seeking admission, gave us a hearty Scotch welcome and a sumptuous repast, to which we did full justice, and for which the good man stoutly refused payment. It was from Mr. Anderson that we learnt that there was a vacant house the other side of Lake Bennett. The house had been used as a road-house, also a post office; it belonged to one of the trading companies, and Mr. Anderson thought that it might be rented or bought for the Mission; and of that house we at once took possession, glad and thankful for the prospect of its shelter during the coming months of winter.

The house was a long, one-storied loghouse standing about fifty yards above the lake, and about the same distance from its margin. There were two good-sized rooms in it, one with large tables and benches, also a small room or office, over which we saw in large letters the words "Bar Room." The other large room had evidently been used as a sleeping apartment, as it contained bunks on each side with very shabby broken-down shelves or bedsteads for the occupants. There was also an office with high desk, intended for whoever took the duties of postmaster, and a fairly good-sized kitchen. The house was not attractive in any way, either from its present conditions or the suggestiveness of its past; one had to shut one's eyes to the internal aspect of things, and to dwell on its possibilities and surroundings. But in this the mountains were helpful, and anyone who has lived long among mountains will

bear witness to their calming, soothing influence. The beauty of their outlines, their ever varying tints and shadows, the mystery of their dark fissures, the rapture of their glory at sunsets all speak of Him who "in His strength setteth fast the mountains and is girded about with power."

Our first night in the road-house, after a ten years' interval, I have still in vivid remembrance. The Bishop, with the help of an Indian, had been very busy bringing up the goods which had come with us from Forty Mile. We had persuaded an Indian "lady" from the camp to commence the process of scrubbing, which our floors sadly needed, but it would take several days' application of soap and soda ere the reminiscence of road-house festivities could be wholly erased; moreover, the place was infested with mice and squirrels; the mice attacked our rice and other stores voraciously and without compunction, the squirrels were equally adept at thieving, and between their various acts of depredation would spring on the rafters and sit grinning at us with the most amusing sauciness. Other reminiscences of road-house convivialities were evident in the scent of tobacco smoke and whisky which haunted the apartments. The space round our house was strewn with empty whisky bottles; an Indian boy soon cleared this for us, with the help of a wheelbarrow which he borrowed at the Caribou Hotel. We paid him 50 cents an hour, and by working strenuously for the space of three hours the bottles were carted off and flung into the lake. After this operation we felt that outwardly, at least, we presented a more respectable appearance.

As soon as we took possession of our log-house the Indians began to rally round us. Tents sprang up

along the lake a short distance from us; several families with numerous children and dogs appeared as occupants, and, thus, a good prospect of occupation for us was rapidly provided. The Bishop's medicine-chest was soon brought into requisition, for an Indian is apt to look upon all "yaltis" (praying men) as more or less "medicine men"; we have to treat all manner of complaints, real and imaginary, describable and indescribable. A man once came to us for medicine—"strong medicine, in case he should be ill next winter"—leaving us to select, as well as to treat, the symptoms which might occur! The children (the nucleus of our school yet to be) were in and out of the Mission all day. We loved the dear little dark-eyed gipsies, full of fun and mischief. It has always been a wonder to find how soon they get into our hearts, and take such deep root there that one is ready to join in that most thrilling of all cries, an Indian mourner's wail, when a child is taken from among them.

Our church services had now to be organized in Caribou, involving various difficulties. There was a large tent standing on the open ground near the station which might be obtained and fitted for the purpose till cold weather came. A few benches were procured, a decent table, which was all we could aspire to for an altar, also a prayer-desk improvised by the Bishop, and a few tin candlesticks borrowed from the hotel and affixed by wires to the roof pole of the tent. We had a good-sized handbell to summon our congregation, which numbered at first only half a dozen Indians, one or two of the Mounted Police, the stationmaster's wife, etc. Our church tent was decorous, but hardly luxurious, especially as the cold winds of autumn came

on ; the tent eaves were lifted up from their moorings, our small stove threw out but little warmth, and I must confess my fingers nearly froze on the keys of the harmonium. None of that congregation but were glad when the Bishop gave notice that "from this time forth services would be held at the Mission House."

The school at Carcross, when first opened, stood on the other side of the lake, and nearly opposite the Mission. A house newly built, but as yet untenanted, had been offered the Bishop. It had many qualifications for a school building ; it was in a good situation, well and strongly built, with rooms capable of ventilation, etc., so the Bishop decided to make the purchase, and the house became Mission property. Before many weeks were over, Miss Ellis and half a dozen of her little folk from Forty Mile had come up with bags and baggage and taken possession of the new premises. "And how about furniture?" you will ask, dear friends of our Mission who do not need to be reminded that we have no furniture stores in Carcross. But we have a sawmill in full work close at hand, and piles of good lumber ; moreover, tools, nails, etc. are ever an essential part of a missionary's equipment. The Bishop and a couple of Indian boys set to work, and in a few days a number of small bedsteads, warranted to bear any weight, a dining-table and two smaller ones, and some strong benches were ready for use. Chairs were improvised out of boxes—one, especially, being fashioned by the boys out of an old barrel picked up on the lake shore, the circle divided, and a false bottom put halfway up for seat. This, after being cushioned and upholstered by Miss Ellis, was presented to the Bishop for his own use.

But the school across the lake was not of long dura-

tion. Flaws soon appear in all human work and contrivances. The poet says, "The best laid schemes of mice and men gang oft agley," and the Bishop's clear-sighted mind soon detected the weak part in the airy castle of our Mission school. Desks and benches were already in evidence, maps and blackboards, slates and pencils, copy-books, ink-powder and pens, and, last but not least, Bibles and reading-books for all ages and of all descriptions—these were all at hand, but how to master the one remaining difficulty which hitherto had been completely ignored—the bridge of the Yukon and White Pass Railway which lay between the Indian camp and the Mission school! The children thought nothing of the dangers of crossing that bridge. They would run across for their five cents' worth of candy even when a train was in sight rounding the corner on the line from Bennett; they would skip fearless over one, two, three of the sleepers which lay so far apart that one could see the blue waters of the lake flowing, yea, often tossing beneath. But the children's indifference to the danger did not lessen its magnitude in the Bishop's eyes. A few weeks after the commencement of school operations, when chaos had been fairly reduced into order, and confusion into rule and discipline, the Bishop imparted to Miss Ellis his wish to remove the school at once to the same side as the Mission House. He had persuaded Major Snyder of the Royal Mounted Police to consent to a change of quarters; the barracks would henceforth be appropriately stationed the same side as the hotel, saloon, store, and white men's cabins, while the school would have its home in the old barracks.

By dint of strenuous labour the change was soon effected—the barracks was transformed into a school-

house, and the newly purchased and equipped school-house became the station of the Royal Mounted Police, whose care and protection we have ever to acknowledge, and for whose many deeds of kindness to the members of our school staff we are duly grateful.

The first year of school life is often very irksome to an Indian child. He will be merry as a grig at times, but if he catches sight of his father or any friend going hunting, the hunger for freedom comes upon him—he will start to run after the hunters, and if caught and sent back to school he will cry and yell until the whole camp is roused, and tearful, sympathizing mothers rush in to know why the Mission folk are killing their darling? The girls are equally resentful of restraint, and look upon a closed door or window as their natural enemy. These spasmodic fits of intolerance of confinement cease after a year or so, but we have always to remember that fresh air is an Indian's natural food—he was born and bred in the woods and has early been used to such extremes of temperature as would make a white child shudder. I will tell you an incident. One of our girls, about eight or nine years old, made off in the woods one day without a word of warning. She contrived to pull out nails from the bedroom window, removed the window, and clambered out. Her reason for doing so, she afterwards explained, was that she was tired of the house (also she wanted to pick berries—*i.e.*, hips—the only berries at that time to be met with), also she was "thinking long" for her brother who had lately died.

Of course, she was very wrong to run away, and there . . .

For about three hours Frisky played about perfectly happy—after that time she got hungry—so hungry

that even chewing gum did not satisfy ; then by good luck—after getting pretty far in the wood—she discovered a small cabin belonging to a white miner, and having got out of one window, Frisky had climbed in by another, and soon found a very acceptable cake of dried meat and hard tack—*i.e.*, sailors' biscuits. With these this small child proceeded to regale herself unmolested by anyone (unsuspicious of danger and utterly forgetful of the Eighth Commandment).

Then the day wore away and, as evening drew on, Frisky retraced her steps, singing as she drew nearer home. By this time she began to feel weary, and it may be conscience had something to say to which the little girl did not quite like to listen, so she walked on and sang on until she came in sight of the school and the Bishop's house beyond. Just behind the Bishop's house on the slope of the hill there was a cluster of trees, and there the girls had been accustomed to play whenever they were located at the Mission. One of these was an old crooked tree which Frisky had often climbed, and she now stretched herself along the bough and found it a not uncomfortable couch for a little tired maiden.

The search party had dispersed and come back announcing that nothing had been seen of the truant, but two of the Mounted Police had whispered that certain small foot-tracks were seen near the house, and so the excitement had cooled down, and the school authorities took comfort in the reflection that such things had been known before and had generally ended well, and Frisky, "little madcap" as Miss E. had once called her, went fast asleep in the crooked tree with only her shawl folded round her. She fancied that she heard the bell for prayers, but she could only keep

herself awake to say the verse all the children said the last thing before they lay down.

The following is Bishop Stringer's report of the school at Carcross for the year 1908: "The school is doing good work, and its influence, I am sure, will be widespread. We hope for a new building and enlarged work during the coming year. A few important changes have taken place in the staff. Miss Ellis resigned her position as matron, which she has held for several years with faithfulness, devotion, and self-forgetfulness. Miss Thompson has also resigned after fulfilling her promised two years' work as teacher. Miss Collins, a graduate of the Deaconess House, Toronto, has taken Miss Ellis's place as matron, and Miss Bell, from England, is teacher. These two ladies, together with Miss Hutchinson, constitute the present staff of the boarding school under Rev. J. Hawksley as nominal Principal of the school."

A friend at White Horse thus writes of her visit to the Mission school at Carcross: "I found everything in the school so exquisitely neat and orderly, such method, quiet, and discipline pervaded each department! Miss Collins, Captain of her Brigade, understands fully the characteristics of those she has to command, and every man under her understands his duty and knows what is expected of him. It is well for the Yukon Indians to be thus wisely and tenderly brought under control. In no other way could the haughty, defiant spirit be broken or tamed. Our present relations with the Indians are such that Christianity and civilization must be taught simultaneously.

"Before leaving the school, Miss Collins said she would let me hear a patriotic song, composed by Mrs. Bompas, with action, which the children had lately learnt. It ran as follows:

A BRITISH SAILOR'S SONG

(*With action*)

Oh, a sailor's life is the life for me,
On my own man-of-war on the briny sea,
And I'll join the brave, the gallant, the free,
And I'll serve my King and Country.

(*At the last line 'I'll serve' the children bow and open their hands as for service.*)

And I'll haul, haul, haul,
Or I'll row, row, row,
Or I'll climb the mizen mast
To look after the foe; (*Here all shade their*
If enemies be near, *eyes to watch for the*
Why Jack knows no fear, *enemy.*)
For he'll fight for his King and Country.

(*At the word 'haul' the children make the movements of hauling ropes on the rigging—at 'row' they pretend to ply the oars—at 'fight' they clench fists at an imaginary foe.*)

And when duty calls,
Jack says ever 'Aye, aye, Sir!'
And he'll stand to his guns
Till right wins the day,
And 'What matter,' says Jack,
'Should my heart's blood pay?
For I'll die for my King and Country!'

(*At 'I'll die' all fall down motionless.*)

"The song and the hearty rendering of it by the Indian children kindled in me strong emotion. I thank

God that the white man is beginning to understand the Indians a little better, and to realize their capacities and their just claims upon him.

"With the sound of those young voices still ringing in my ears, I quitted the Mission school, and as I took my seat on the train to Skagway, the words of an old Scotchman found echo, partly serious, in my heart: 'Weel, man, I'm thinking King Edward, if he only kent what brave defenders of the faith and upholders of his crown he had in the Indians of Yukon Diocese, more especially those of Carcross, shure he'd be a prood man!'"

We must not close this chapter without referring to the fact that a neat little church, named St. Saviour's, was consecrated at Carcross in August, 1904. Funds for this had been raised chiefly by friends outside the diocese, the Women's Auxiliary contributing the lion's share of $800. Bishop Bompas not only superintended, but took an active part in its erection. The Mission House had proved far too small for the ever-growing congregation, and it was, therefore, a great comfort and joy to him to see the new little church completed and to hold the first service beneath its roof.

CHAPTER XII

THE LAST YEARS

(1904—1917)

THE foregoing pages have given Mrs. Bompas's cheerful account of the hardships undergone by her and her husband. The following is an account given by a visitor of their quarters in 1903 when they accounted themselves to have arrived at comparative comfort.

Bishop Ridley, of Caledonia, who in 1903 stayed at Carcross, speaks as follows of his meeting with Bishop Bompas, and describes in what manner of house he found that the Bishop and Mrs. Bompas had made their home.

"There on the platform stands the straight and venerable hero of the North, Dr. Bompas, the Bishop of Selkirk. I jumped from the train, and, though I had never met him before, I grasped his hand and exclaimed: 'At last! At last!' We knew each other well by letter only. He was as placid as the mountains and the lakes they embosom.

"Bishop's house (was) built of logs, on the sand. The flooring boards were half an inch apart; so shrunken were they that it would be easy to rip them up and lay them down close together. Then the roof; it was papered, with battens across the paper. I was anxious to see inside less of the light of heaven through the rents. Ventilation is carried to excess. Everything around is as simple as indifference to creature

comforts can make it, excepting the books, which are numerous, up to date, and as choice as any two excellent scholars could wish.

"The question that has often sprung from my heart has been this: if this poor £30 affair is, by comparison, delightful, what of the contrivances that have sheltered them in the past forty years?

"Never in my life did I value hospitality so much, or feel so honoured, as here under the roof of these grand apostles of God. Two septuagenarians of grace and broad culture, whose years have been spent nobly in God's eyes, have deliberately chosen an austere type of service, not for austerity's sake, but for Christ's sake, under circumstances the average citizen of the Empire would feel to be past endurance. They are as happy as heroic. She, accomplished far beyond the standard one meets with in London drawing-rooms, unless among the most cultured circles: he, a fine scholar, steeped in Hebrew and Syrian lore, as well as in the commoner studies of the clergy, live on, love on, labour on in this vast expanse, little trodden but by the Indians for whom they live and will die.

"If such lives fail in Christ's cause, that cause is doomed. Let those who criticize cease their cackling and try to imitate by self-sacrifice such lives as those I have just touched on, and they, too, may have some share in the betterment of mankind, the expansion of Christ's kingdom, and the eternal welfare of humanity."*

In 1904 Mrs. Bompas (then seventy-four years old) visited Eastern Canada and addressed the Women's Auxiliary at Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, and Quebec on missionary work in the North. In Toronto she was

* "An Apostle of the North," pp. 290-294.

presented with $800 towards the building fund for St. Saviour's Church, Carcross. Other gifts came steadily in. The building of a new church at Carcross was a great comfort to the Bishop. Services had been held in the Mission House, which was much too small. St. Saviour's was consecrated on August 8, 1904, after Mrs. Bompas's return to the diocese.

Although resigning much of her former work into younger and stronger hands, after removing to Carcross, Mrs. Bompas's love and labours for the little ones still continued. In a copy of *The New Era* there is a picture of a group of Miss Ellis and Indian children in "Caribou Crossing School." One of this bright group, described as "with the smiling face," is Minnie, who lived with Mrs. Bompas from the time she was two years of age, and in this group is also Susie, a deaf and dumb Indian from Selkirk, who was her special care.* Another of the children was a daughter of Skookum Jim, a wealthy Indian of Klondyke fame, and a pure Indian, "Daisy Jim" by name.

"The Bishop's burden of responsibility had of late years been greatly increased by the care of the white men, and weighed heavily upon him. But the darkest hour is the hour before the dawn; the labourer's task was nearly accomplished.

"The Rev. I. O. Stringer had been nominated by the Bishop, and approved by the C.M.S. and the Canadian Board of Missions, as successor to Bishop Bompas in the See of Selkirk (Yukon). He was a good man, an earnest churchman, and had had some years' experience among the Indians of Peel River

* N.B.—Susie was later placed in a special school in Winnipeg, and died there in 1907.

and the Esquimaux of Herschel Island, at the mouth of the Mackenzie. Mr. Stringer was consecrated Bishop at St. John's Cathedral, Winnipeg, December 17, 1905, and his arrival in Selkirk Diocese was ardently longed for. In 1906 the Bishop and Mrs. Bompas prepared to go down the river to Forty Mile, below Dawson. A passage had been secured for them and two Indian girls on one of the river steamers to sail on Monday. This was Saturday, June 9. The Bishop was as active as ever that day."*

The rest of the sad story is best told in Mrs. Bompas's own words in a letter to her friend, L.C.W. :

To L. C. W.

July 12, 1906.

Thank you . . . The blow has been very severe, coming as it did, so suddenly. In his usual health lately, and wonderful for his activity and energy. We were all packed up to start for White Horse and down the Yukon on Monday the 11th. On Saturday he had been twice into town and once up to the Camp—had long talks with Bishop Stringer. Then we dined altogether, and my husband read prayers, and then he retired to his study, where, while standing near his writing-table, the "angel of the Lord smote him." He fell suddenly forward. Annie, one of our girls, caught him and supported him, calling loudly for help. Bishop Stringer went and then called me. We laid him down and did all we could to restore him. He only opened his eyes once and moaned at first, otherwise he gave no sign of pain. It was dreadful when Bishop

* "An Apostle of the North," p. 314.

Stringer whispered, "I fear it is no use"; and I realized that all was over! I can hardly bear to write of those days, it was all so strange and bewildering, I seemed turned to stone. . . .

Bishop Stringer was very kind and thoughtful. We had to make all arrangements for the funeral. I knew that he wished to be laid in the Indian cemetery, which is about half a mile from here. I wired to my nephew in London. The news spread like wildfire. On Monday there were notices of him in the Seattle papers, with his likeness! I have had seventy-nine letters, some of them most thrilling; all testify to the love and veneration in which he was held. . . .

We laid him in the grave on Monday—St. Barnabas' Day—at five o'clock p.m. All the flags on boats and offices were lowered. The steamer delayed its sailing that the Captain and men might attend the funeral. Bishop Stringer and Archdeacon Cody took the service, Mr. O'Meara the lesson. We had two hymns, "Jesus lives" and "For all the saints." We took him in a boat on leaving the church, Archdeacon Cody and I and some of the bearers in the boat.

* * * * *

Soon after this sad day Mrs. Bompas, accompanied by the Bishop and Mrs. Stringer, went home to England where she remained a year.

Returning to Canada in September, 1907, she settled down, after her devoted life and strenuous activities in the North, to a quiet life with her two nieces, Beatrice and Lilian Bengough, in Westmount, P.Q. Here she lived for nearly ten years, still taking a keen interest in all missionary work and keeping in touch with the progress and development in the North

through her intercourse with Bishop Stringer. He and Mrs. Stringer called upon her whenever they passed through Montreal on their way to and from England, and in 1914, on their return journey, took a special trip to Winchester, Ontario, where Mrs. Bompas was laid up with a broken hip at the Rectory, where she was visiting. Mrs. Bompas also continued to influence and help some of her Indian girls in the North, who wrote to her of their marriages, babies, etc., and who looked for and received many presents from her. Every year she collected and made and bought presents to decorate a Christmas-tree for the Mission school at Carcross, even in 1916, when she was nearing her 87th year.

Mrs. Bompas was very much loved by many friends, and a visit from her was always a pleasure. She was eagerly sought for meetings of the W.A. in Montreal, Ottawa, etc., and many an annual and other meeting was made more interesting by her addresses and her charming personality. It seemed so wonderful that such a tiny, frail little frame could have endured such experiences.

She recovered from her broken hip (*eighty-three years old*), and walked *without crutches within a year,* and lived to break two more bones and recover from the injuries. She took a deep interest in the war, and was one of the first to subscribe to its funds. She was as fond of visiting her friends as they were glad to have her. After spending ten days in Ottawa in 1915, she wrote to her hostess, L. C. W., July 26: "Thank you for saying you missed us. I owe to you some of the pleasantest ten days I ever spent. They will all come back to me in sweet and fragrant retrospect."

The Christmas after her accident she was much

gratified by the gift of a beautiful wheel chair with an inscription on the silver plate

MRS. C. S. BOMPAS
WITH AFFECTIONATE REGARDS
FROM
The Archbishops and Bishops of
CANADA
Toronto, September 16, 1915.

and from the Women's Auxiliary an ebony stick with gold top, which she always loved to use.

Once again she composed a Christmas carol, which was sung in more than one church on Christmas Day, 1916. Just after this Christmas Day a cold developed into one of her old attacks of bronchitis, and she had to remain in bed, devotedly nursed by her niece, assisted by a trained nurse.

On January 5, 1917, she wrote a letter of birthday greeting to L. C. W. : "I write under difficulty, with an aching head and giddy brain, and from my couch, so that I must ask you to excuse pencil, but must send you my wizen old face" (her photograph) "to wish you a happy, the happiest of birthdays."

This was the last letter written with her own hands, although she dictated a few letters during the following fortnight. The bronchial trouble was relieved by medical skill and good nursing, but the vitality was so lowered that the system could not rally, and at 2.40 a.m. on January 21, 1917—a month before her eighty-seventh birthday—she quietly fell asleep.

When her room was arranged with the many floral offerings kindly sent, a friend who had come to say

a last good-bye to the form resting so peacefully, exclaimed : " It looks like a little corner of Paradise !"

A service was held at the Church of the Advent, Westmount, where she had worshipped with unfailing regularity for the last ten years, and according to her express wish, her body was then taken to the little village churchyard at Milby, near Lennoxville, where a sister-in-law and several cousins already lay. Deep snow lay on the ground, and as the little procession wound its way along the quiet country road and approached the church, the tolling of the bell struck impressively on the ear through the solemn stillness.

She has passed from sight, but her works, her example, her influence will long be felt. Many missionaries still on active service testify that they have found her life, her devout faith and zeal, helpful and inspiring, and many Christian Indians, realizing how much they owe to her for their happy Christian homes, will ever remember her with deep affection.

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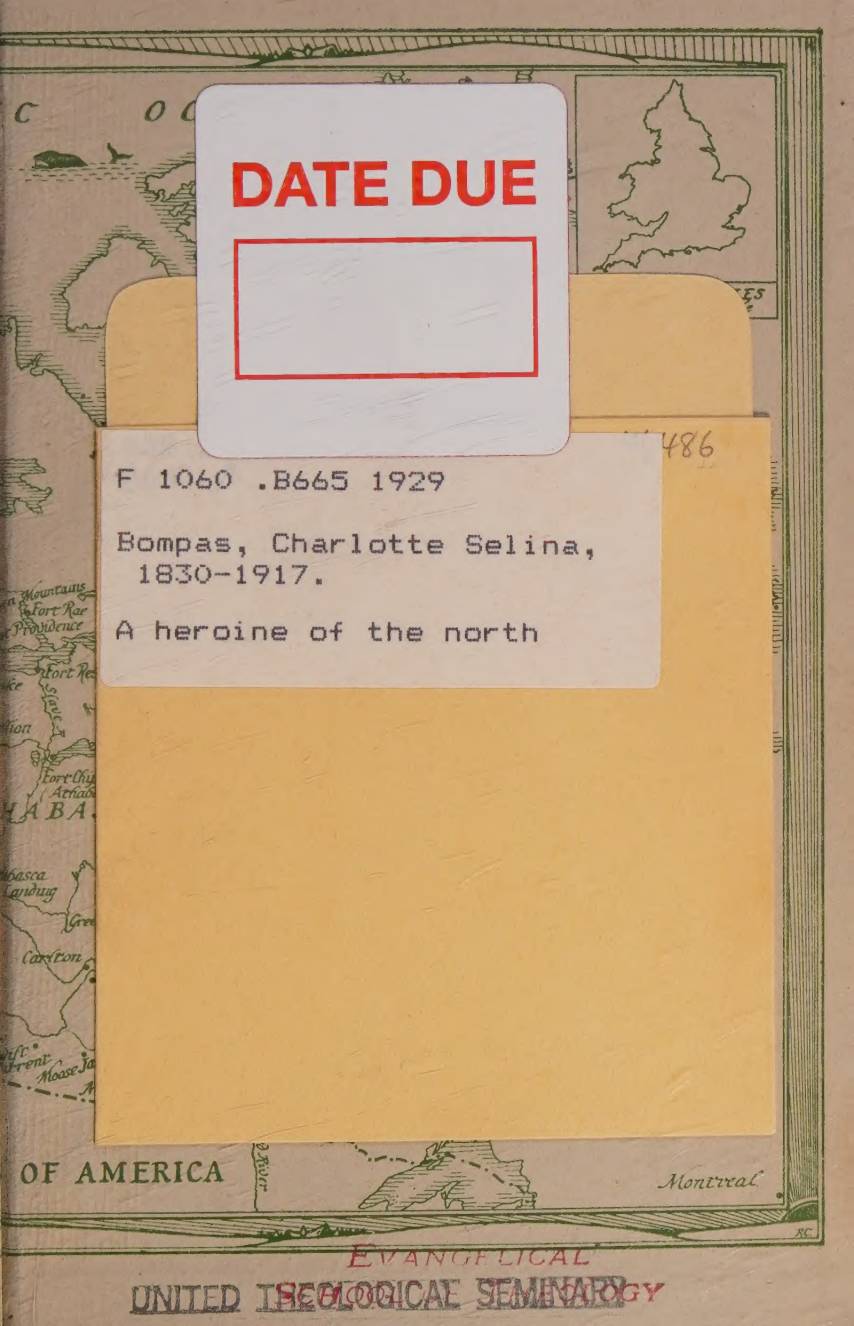
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